planting areas, a committee member says, "I have never been on this part of the course"; then you are on the right track!

Aim to link planting to existing woodland or scattered trees as this produces a cohesive landscape, see photo three. Scallop planting back from landing areas and bunkers. Maintain a strip of rough from fairway to the planting area and increase the width when the land falls away towards the planting.

4. Why plant new trees so close?
When planting to create a woodland the trees are usually between 2 - 3m apart. This often appears too dense, especially to green staff when they are mowing between the trees.

However, there is reason behind our madness. Naturally trees produce millions of seeds and tens of thousands of seedlings per hectare, so the aim of new planting is to economically reflect this natural pattern.

The first objective is to close a woodland canopy, so that the trees shade out the weed competition and the closer together the trees are the quicker this objective is achieved, see photo four.

Secondly, the trees provide mutual protection from exposed conditions and golf balls, improving the overall survival and growth rates. Thirdly, widely spaced trees tend to grow outwards rather than upwards resulting in a scrubby form. Closer spacing forces the trees to compete for the light, producing trees with clear, straight stems that form more attractive trees in the long term.

5. Should we mow between young trees?
To mow or not to mow, this is a question that recurs time and again on different courses. For young trees the answer is generally yes, at least for a short while, then NO. The factors that have to be borne in mind are:

For:
- Grass is maintained as the dominant "weed", reducing the invasion by noxious weeds such as nettle, thistle and ragwort.
- Golfers can find lost balls more quickly and this reduces slow play.
- Easier access for other maintenance operations, such as spot weeding.

Against:
- Mown grass is more competitive for moisture and nutrients, thus slowing tree growth.
- Inter-tree mowing is time-consuming and therefore costly.
- Increased risk of damage to trees from cutting machinery.

On balance I tend to recommend inter-tree mowing a couple of times per year for the first few years - up to five - then phasing out to allow the woodland understorey to develop. As the woodland canopy closes, grass growth is increasingly suppressed by the reduced light.

The mowing should be focussed to where it is most needed, specifically within the first 5-10m of the edge and in places that receive a high proportion of golf balls, see photo five. Where tree shelters have been used to protect the trees from animal browsing, they provide additional benefit of increased protection from mowing.

Where the planting is more parkland in character mowing may want to continue for aesthetic reasons, but from the trees' point of view uncut is better. It can often be worthwhile weeding around mature trees to reduce the risk of mower damage to the base of the trunk.

6. Is this tree dangerous?
Or the other favourite variation is "Why is this tree dead?" Both these questions are specific to the site, and the actual tree. However, some general observations can be made.

A tree may be subject to the following pressures: old age, rot infection, squirrel bark stripping, golf ball damage, strimmer blight and drought or waterlogged soil.

Normally a mature tree is not killed by one specific factor but rather a combination, with one factor proving to be "the straw that broke the camel's back."

Trees live symbiotically with a wide variety of organisms from tiny beetles to red deer, aphids to golfers. The problem occurs when one or more of these pressures exceed the trees' own resources. A larger mature tree will have more resources than a one-year old seedling, hence the reason why newly planted trees are at greater risk.

The other major consideration is who or what is the tree a danger to? An old rotten beech tree in the middle of a wood is completely different to one
next to the captain's car parking space!

When assessing if a tree is dangerous you have to take account of both how likely it is to fall and what, or whom, it would damage if it did fall. Golf clubs have a legal responsibility to take reasonable precautions for tree safety on their course.

7. Do we need permission to fell these trees?

Yes and no. The Forestry Act requires that you obtain permission in the form of a felling licence before you undertake any tree felling, unless:

- The tree is dead, dying or dangerous. The onerous will be on you to prove the state of the tree prior to felling.
- The timber volume is less than 5m$^3$, or 3m$^3$ if the timber is to be sold, per quarter. This is a relatively low threshold and may be exceed by two or three large trees.
- The felling is part of a planning approval.
- If the tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or within a conservation area you will require permission from the local council for any tree works, from pruning to felling.

In fact, any operation that might impinge on the health of the tree, such as tee extensions, will require permission from the council tree officer. Photograph seven shows the woodland at Oakmere Park golf course before the creation of three new golf holes that required planning approval before the trees could be felled.

8. Can we get a grant for our woodlands?

Again the answer is yes and no. Over the years it has become increasingly difficult to source funding for woodland work on golf courses. This is due to the government focusing money toward management plans and increased levels for restocking and out of keeping with the overall landscape. Frequently a narrow strip is all that is available and this leads to planting of a single species in a line, such as leylandii. Firstly, this can look very artificial and out of keeping with the overall landscape. Secondly, and more importantly, all the trees begin to decline and fail at a similar time.

The club then faces the even harder problem of replacing a mature screen with young trees. In these situations a phased removal, normally a third of the trees at a time, over several years tends to be the best option. The gaps created can be filled with new planting that becomes established before the next phase.

Trees and woodland create beautiful and secluded landscapes that are enjoyed and appreciated by golfers and greenkeepers alike. The problems faced by greenkeepers are common across the country and lessons can be learned from others experience. Hopefully, this article has gone some way to answering your tree queries.

Mark Gordon is Associate Director of woodland consultants Eamonn Wall & Co.
Not many people in the golfing industry understand the saying “Behavioural Safety”. This terminology refers to the attitude of the individual or team in respect of actions to work and behave safely. Behaving safely is an attitude that many workers, employees, etc need to adopt to really improve the safety at their club.

So what does behaving safely really mean?

Behaving safely means taking the extra care and consideration to not put your own or others safety at risk. An example of not behaving safely in everybody’s lives is driving too fast and without due care. The government estimated that approximately 40% of drivers drive without any consideration for their own or fellow drivers safety.

This statistics is reflected in the number of road accidents per day, the number of fatal accidents and the number of pedestrians killed. Almost all accidents are preventable and approximately 98% are caused by human error. So what goes wrong in this example; the main element is the driver, or drivers, forget the basic rules of driving safely and forget the respect and consideration needed to operate what is dangerous machinery. Quite often the drivers only really ever learn the hard way after the event when serious injury or even the cause of a death has occurred.

So what has this to do with the golfing fraternity; Golf courses require the use of some heavy and dangerous machinery as well handling of dangerous chemicals and in some cases lifting awkward and heavy loads.

If we as the golfing fraternity are behaving safely we will do things the right way which means the following:

- Take sufficient time and planning.
- Ensure we are trained for the task.
- Understand the hazards and risks.
- Comply with club procedures.
- Use the correct tools.
- Ask questions.
- Do not proceed if unsure of any item of the work.
- Act with respect to fellow workers and people in the area.

If we were not Behaving safely we are likely to carry the job out as such;

- Start the job without understanding what can go wrong.
- Use wrong tools and not change them due to delay in completing the job.
- Proceed without respect for persons around them.
- Not gain approval to proceed.

The concept of behaving safely becomes a new way of thinking for many people that have previously taken safety for granted, ie “It will never happen to me”. It starts to become the right way, not the wrong way, it becomes an attitude passed on to others, it encourages more efficiency and pride in ones work, it promotes a positive way of thinking that will reflect in many other aspect of the club’s performance.

Behavioural Safety is not something that happens instantly but takes time for persons to change their mindset and to adopt a better attitude. A person who is convinced of behavioural safety will ask a fellow worker a question as to the safety of a task with the aim of assisting them or preventing an accident. Learn more about behaving safely and watch your work change for the better.

Jerrard Winter, Haztek International Golf Health and Safety Specialists. 0208 905 7552

Outstanding, that's the new cutting system from Toro. It shaves golf greens closer than ever - down to one-sixteenth of an inch!

Toro's new Greensmaster 3250-D has pushed ride-on mower cutting technology to its lowest limits. Three 53cm wide DPA (Dual Point Adjust) cylinders clip 0.8mm closer than previous units - ideal for hard-cutting new plant cultivars for fester greens.

The lightweight, die-cast aluminium cylinder frame is durable and precision-engineered for micrometre bedknife-to-reel adjustments of just 0.01778mm.

With DPA cutting heads as standard on 8- and 11-blade units, and precise contour following from the narrower track between front and rear rollers, Toro's Greensmaster 3250-D gets up close.

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Toro's revolutionary Greensmaster with DPA now clips even closer.
It's December and as we enter the final stages in the planning for BTME & Clubhouse 2005 I wonder where the year has gone. Having recently renewed acquaintances with an old friend I am reminded how easy it is to lose contact and how a great many of us use occasions such as Harrogate as an opportunity to catch up on those lost friendships.

The 'Harrogate week', as it is often referred to, is more than just an exhibition, more than just an education opportunity, it is a bringing together of like minded people who have one over-riding common interest - greenkeeping - and the provision of the best facility possible regardless of the resources available.

No matter which country they come from and no matter what type of golf club, the conversations revolve around the latest equipment, the current thinking on maintenance and presentation of the golf course and an open and frank exchange of problems, solutions and ideas.

In recent years the addition of the Clubhouse Exhibition and a range of seminars aimed at golf club Secretaries, Managers and Owners has resulted in a steady increase in the number of this category of visitor. Harrogate used to be seen by many as an excuse to get away from work or home and enjoy some of the other attractions of the town, often to excess! I am pleased to say that we have moved away from this less acceptable image. I hope that BIGGA can rely upon your support, if only for a day, and don't forget to bring with you the Secretary or Manager or perhaps the Chairman of Green.

On Friday January 21 2005 BIGGA will host at Harrogate an International Summit. This has usually been held at the GCSAA show and I feel very privileged in being able to organise this event. The summit has developed over recent years to become a forum where greenkeeping associations and other related organisations from around the world are able to discuss and progress initiatives of common interest.

There are two main items currently on the agenda: One, A Global Environmental Policy and, two, the development of a set of standards for professional golf course management. Both of these items have been extensively discussed during the year and by consolidating various existing proposals and policies it has been possible to produce draft documents for consideration at the Summit.

In November I attended the conference held by the South West and South Wales Region when the theme for the day was 'The Environment'. The presentations were excellent and I hope that those delegates not already directly involved in an environment project went away duly motivated enough to think about their own golf course. It is all too easy to blame a lack of resource, be it manpower or funding, however there is quite a lot that can be done with very little effort or cost. Golf courses are a major user of land and one of the Association's projects for next year is to try to establish the extent of environmental best practice being carried out in Britain. This will then give us a 'benchmark' against which we can measure the future.

Legislation and the demands for a more discerning golfer will force many clubs down a route that they have chosen to ignore. It is proposed to hold a series of workshops next year on the development of an environment policy and the R&A have agreed to make a grant towards the cost of the training. If you need more information or help in getting started then please do not hesitate to contact Ken Richardson or Sami Collins at BIGGA Headquarters.

Finally I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information or help. It is my duty to get in touch with Andrew and he will be more than happy for you to visit, it would certainly be worthwhile to take a member of your club committee with you just to let them see what should be provided for golf course staff, especially to keep within the Health and Safety Legislations which are coming to us thick and fast these days.

Anyway, I know you are all dying to know who your new committee are for the next year, so, are you sitting comfortably, then I'll begin!

Chairman, Stuart Cruickshank; R&A; Deek Scott, Scoottie Golf Course; Past Chairman, Andy O'Hara, Leven Links; Corporate member, J. Finlayson, Scotlube; Secretary/Treasurer, yes you're stuck with me again, John Crawford, Stirling Golf Club.

As this is the final report for this year I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us this year, i.e. the Patron's of the Scottish Region, the numerous golf clubs for the courtesy of their facilities, the Section Committee, those members who supported our events, to those of you who didn't, thanks anyway for being part of the Association. Wishes for a very happy Christmas and a very prosperous New Year.

Dennis Tweddell
hard work to the Section over the years. They were not replaced, as there are enough
on the committee for the present.

The seminar evening was held at The MacDonald Golf Club, in Ellon, on November
12 and was a resounding success. The speakers went down well and are to be thanked
for their contribution, with the main speaker being Dave Renwick, who is currently
Vijay's Singh's dad, the number one golfer in the world. Dave had to answer many
questions and this proved to be very entertaining. The other speakers were Dave
Watson, of East Aberdeenhire GC, and John Gavin, of Paul Lawrie Management. Our
thanks also go to MacDonald Golf Club who fed us superbly with a carvery and also
kept us well watered. There were about 80 people attending and this was up on last
year. £100 was raised for the Archway charity, which helps look after disabled people.

It was also noted that a certain chirpy bluesonce bought a round of drinks and this
was thoroughly appreciated by everyone. He also had a tie on for the first time ever,
honest.

The outings for next year are at Murcar in the Spring and Garmouth in the Autumn.
The Scottish National Championship for greeners is to be held at The McDonald
Golf Club, in Ellon, on June 23, 2005.

The tickets for the 200 Club will arrive sometime in the new year and Hughie
McLachlan, from Peterhead, is running the club. He can be contacted on 01779 470173.
The show at Scotsturfs was held on November 10 and 11 and was a lot smaller a
show than anything I have been to before at Scotsturfs. The fertiliser companies were
absent and this made it possible to walk around the show in no time at all. For anyone
travelling a great distance this may have been disappointing.

The Patron Award winners are heading to Stirling shortly to pick up their awards
and they are David Duggan, of Fortrose GC, and Duncan Adams, of Nemmacher GC.
They also get a trip to Harragrate for their award.

I would also like to wish Mike Wilson all the best for the future. MIke, formerly of
Forres GC, always had the course in pristine condition and on behalf of the members I
would like to wish him and his family all the best for the future.

Have a Merry Christmas, a good New Year and a hassle free holiday period.

Iain Gunn

West

Our AGM was held at Hampden Park on October 27 and it was great to see such a
big turn out. There were 38 members in attendance and they were treated to a tour
round the complex. Scottish Grass Machinery sponsored the day and laid on several
different demonstrations of equipment. Thanks to Dave McNoy for his continued
support and to Kenny Hunter for organising the programme.

The day ran very well and the new committee is; Fraser Ross, Chairman; Douglas
McIntosh, Vice Chairman; Brian Bolland, Past Chairman; Gavin Jarvis, Secretary; John
Robertson, Education; Derek Duthe, Trade; Kenny Hunter, Trade. There are two new
members, Stuart Taylor and Eddie McGee welcome aboard. I would like to thank Brain
Bolland for his two years as Chairman, he worked very hard for the Section, attending
various seminars, golf outings and many other duties involved with the post.

Gerry Bruen, from Williamwood Golf Club, is moving on to pastures new, he has
been appointed Head Greenkeeper of Kikkoel Golf Club, in Northern Ireland. I'm sure we
all wish Gerry all the best, many thanks for the hard work you carried out for the
Section over the years.

There are three new members this month Andrew Peace, Port Glasgow Golf Club,
Steven Copland, Kirkintilloch Golf Club, and Alan Dykes, World of Golf, to welcome to
the Section.

It's with great sadness that I announce the death of Robert (BOB) Scott who was
Head Greenkeeper at Elderslie Golf Club for many years. Our thoughts are with his
family, for his next appearance!

With Christmas fast approaching, Chairman, Den Cockburn, has added a new pair
of driving glasses to his wish list. This is due to the fact that when dropping his son at
school, he ran into a closed barrier, resulting in a shattered windscreen, among other
tings! Luckily the barrier survived the incident, I'm pleased to report.

Finally, thank you to John Watts and Frank Stewart, who have both volunteered to
be on the committee with immediate effect.

Merry Christmas and a very happy 2005 to all members and their families, I hope
Santa is kind to you all?

Adam Speight, Tel: 01274 638366, Mobile: 07739319060, Email:
adam speight1156 fslife.co.uk

Cleveland

Firstly I would like to apologise for the lack of news over the last few months -
however this was due to some technical problems within the 'Electronic World'. The
relevant computer at Headquaters did not receive the notes! Therefore if I have
repeated any items please bear with me.

However congratulations are in order for Martin and Joanne Woods. They have
recently had a visit from the stork, who delivered their first child, little Charlotte,
who weighed in at 7lbs 2 oz. Good luck to all three of you. Bags under the eyes and
dirty fingernails will soon be evident in the Bedlington sheds! Best wishes also go to
Phil Hargrave, of Crook Golf Club, who married Suzanne in early July. Good luck to
you both from all Cleveland members.

The Autumn Tournament took place recently, at Saltburn Golf Club, kindly
sponsored by Brendan Brown of Norlube. This type of main sponsorship is very
much appreciated by our Section - thanks Brendan. Phil and his staff have the place
in first class order - well done. Mind you the course certainly takes its toll on the 50
plus brigade who have dodgy knees. It was Saturday before I could walk again.

First prize went to Ian Holohan, of Middlesbrough Municipal, he nudged out
Barry Walker on the back 9 scoring, both players scoring
34 points. Martin Woods, of Bedlington, finished a close third with 33 points. Ian said a few words at the
presentation, he said how pleased he was to take first prize but, more importantly,
he took a quid off his golfing protégé, Tony Smith, of Teeside. Results of the
Whitelaw Bowl held at Penrith on September 8: Tony Smith, Teeside GC, came 3rd;
Ian Holoran, Middlesbrough Municipal, came 2nd.

News from an UN-NAMED reliable source; in the Middlesbrough Municipal Open held on August 15, in a Four ball-Better ball competition. Tony Smith (partner was Ian Holoran) got on the scoreboard only twice! Comments were that if we converted the number of Tony's puts into points in a Stableford competition, they would win 99 times out of 100! Practice required here Mr Chairman.

The jobs merry-go-round has begun. Barry Walker has moved from Wearside to City of Newcastle. Good luck Baz! I wonder how he will cope in the heartland of the Mags?

Any suggestions for winter lectures or visits please contact Ian Pemberton (07985508878). The annual T.S.L. Quiz will take place, as usual, at Mount Oswald Golf Club, 7.30pm start on Wednesday December 8. The Greenkeepers have the title to defend so get those details in your diary NOW! I have had a request from the Section committee, which I am pleased to comply with. They won the quiz last year after many second places. The main difference in 2003 was that their usual losing team captain, Kevin Heslop, from Branocspeth Castle, was unable to attend. Therefore, if any member of the Section knows any policemen in the Crook area can you please ask them to detain Kev at 6.30 pm on the night. He could be released at around 10 pm.

News please to El Prez on 07831 214879.

Terry Charlton

Sheffield

This is the last of my monthly newsletters. As most of you know I have accepted an invitation to become Vice Captain at Gainsborough GC and as a result of this I shall no longer have the time to commit myself to anything else at present. I must say a big thank you to all who have contributed to the newsletters and I hope you will support whoever takes on the role of compiling the editorials after me.

The lecture season is upon us once again and the first held, as usual, was at Rotherham GC (our thanks go to them for the use of their clubhouse). The lecture was by Jerrard Winter, of Haezek International, so many thanks go to him for a very enjoyable talk and interaction on Health and Safety.

There was a reasonable turnout but it goes without saying really that we would like to see more members attending, especially new members, as our Chairman has worked very hard in acquiring a wide range of different and informative topics, hopefully for you all to enjoy. Please don't let all his hard work go to waste, come and support the Section and chat with old friends and make some new ones.

The Rigby Taylor Trophy between Sheffield and the Northern Section took place at a sun kissed Huddersfield GC in September. The day was a great success, everyone taking part really enjoyed themselves. The result was a honourable draw, three matches each, but the Northern Section actually retained the trophy because they won the last time this match was played back in 1994. The return match has already been arranged and will be played at Hillsborough GC on July 13 next year. We look forward to this enjoyable day and the promise of a great day.

Congratulations go out to our ex President, Ken Arnold, on a hole in one at Abbeydale GC recently. Ken Arnold is one of the oldest members at Abbeydale and achieved his feat in the same week that the youngest member also hit a hole in one at the very same hole. Many thanks once again for your support.

Geoff Wells

North Wales

The Buckley, from Northop GC, has a new position at Rhyl GC, we wish him well there and Don Pemberton, ex Vale Royal Abbey, has started with Arcloid, based in Shropshire, as a Representative for the Kubota range of machinery.

Penybryn driving range has opened a 9-hole golf course, just across the way from North Wales's Pebble Beach resort of Nefyn. The owner, Mr Will Owen, had the original idea for his land with great sea views and this, combined with the large carpark next door, plus the driving range, will attract a lot of holiday traffic starting the 2005 season. It will also host the Wake fest held in June each year on his adjoining fields with over 10,000 surf enthusiasts from all over the globe parlying through the night.

Terry Adamson seems to get into these notes every month, this time it is for the car crash he had on the A55 near to Bangor, he was trapped for a few minutes as the car door had jammed with the impact, he has sustained whiplash and is still having nightmares of the car coming up behind him in his rear view mirror, he is currently recuperating over at Tequisa GC, in Tenerife. We wish him well and hope he can take off the neck brace when he returns to play at our Christmas tournament on December 8 (results next month).

Also next month is Harrogate BTME, we are a little under six weeks away. January 18, 19 & 20 2005. I am always saying "make sure you book your accommodation", with all the extra activities going on at the night time it really is essential to book in early as most of the primetime walking location places will have gone by now. For those of you attending the GCSAA show in February again in Orlando, Florida, there is still a chance to get some great deals both on flights and accommodation. The GCSAA also hosts a night at Sea World for attendees to get together.

Well it is just short and sweet this month as we head up to the festive season, and it leaves me to do with you yours a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Mesen Cymru

Andrew Acorn acornagolf@supanet.com

East Midlands

This year's annual Rigby Taylor golf match against the Midland Section was kindly hosted by Lingdale GC on October 14. The previous day saw an exceptional amount of rainfall and the day started with even more rain, for the morning Greensomes. After the morning round the East Midlands led by 3 points to 2, with a fine 685 win from Richard Barker and Chris Brown.

The other two points came from Adi Porter & Stuart Raybould, and Steve Donoghue & Gavin Robson. After our lunch, the weather had brightened up ready for our afternoon singles round, with us needing a further four and a half points to retain the Shield. The afternoon round consisted of some very big wins for both sides, Adi Porter winning 7&5, Antony Birdley winning 7&6 and, unfortunately, Stuart Raybould obtaining a walkover as one of the Midlands players was unable to continue.

The other victory came from Andy Marsh, 1 up, with Richard Barker earning a hard fought half. This resulted in a tie, but as previous winners we were able to retain the Rigby Taylor Shield. Our other two remaining players to make up the ten man side were Dave Leatherland and Russell Allen.

Our thanks should go to Lingdale GC for hosting the competition and thanks also to Andy McGeal and his staff for presenting a superb golf course in such wet conditions. Also thanks to the Steward and Stewardless for a really great meal. A special thank you should go to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day, especially to Tony Cheese and Geoff Little for all their superb work in organising the day.

Also could I once again remind all members to return their entry forms and payment before the closing date of any event, the reason for this is that numbers and tee-off times have to be confirmed with the golf clubs.

Antony Birdley

Midland

It must be something in the water (by any other word poison!) Stupid me, with grain or grape, nectar. Plying has worked well for me in the past, although somewhat distant. "So what's the mud fool on about now?"

Congratulations to three of our chaps, and of course their fair lasses. L. Swann and fiancée, Sonia, with baby girl, Amy, who shall be the little sister of Joshua. D. Maydew and wife, Jill, with baby boy Daniel. C.Tidmarsh and wife Emma with baby boy George, I know Asda's cost effective but that's extreme Craig. There is also another on the way, but I shall have to keep you in suspenders for now, all shall be revealed soon enough. It must be an adult thing. I'm so glad one is still a boy.

As you maybe aware, for many years our Section has played an annual match against our good friends and neighbours, the East Midland Section. This year we were blessed with the pleasure of playing Lingdale Golf Club. Our thanks to Mr A. McGeal and his fine team for producing such fine standards in the most difficult and inclement of weathers. Very well done gentlemen. Also, thanks to Lingdale for affording us the pleasure of their course.

The match was eventually a tie, but as winners of last year the East Midland team retain the shield. Well played gentlemen. Our thanks to A. Bindley for sorting out the opposition team, and to T. Cheese, of Rigby Taylor, for their kind sponsorship of this very successful event. Long may such continue.

On October 31 we held our annual angling match against our friends from Middleton Hall Anglers Association. We had a lovely morning's fishing in great weather, followed by a delicious buffet and drinks. The Greenkeepers won this year, but I was a little concerned with the amount of flasks P Johnson had in his creel. Peter cleaned up very nicely thank you with largest fish, heaviest bag, and obviously the sweep. Combined worth in the region of £90, not bad for a morning's fishing. Other prize winners being A. Shore and yours truly. Our greatest of thanks to Mr A. Southam, of Hanson Aggregates, for organising the event, the great prize table and for putting on such a great spread which contained some of Mrs Southam's lovely trifles. Thanks also to Middleton Hall Anglers for making us so very welcome, we look forward to next year's match. Cheers Allan.
As you may recall, earlier in the year BIGGA, in association with Bernhard, ran a competition to win a trip to the GCSA show in Florida. M. Gash has been successful in his application. I have every confidence that Mike shall represent our Section to the highest of standards, and shall return with some great stories. Watch this space.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome four new members to our Section: Mr Timms, Mr N. Rhyewood, Mr E. G. Mutch, and Mr J. A. Cunningham. Also, I would like to include the new members that I had included within last month’s notes, but due to a reason beyond my simple comprehension was not published. Such being: Neil Smith and Christopher Roberts, from Ludlow GC, Charley Allwood, from Brockington Hall GC, and lastly my old friend Paul Whitten, from Fulford Heath GC (I hope you are not kipping in Lyra Jones’ old bedroom or I’ll have to kill you). Lee, if you read this ring me on the following, I’d love to catch up with you, 0121 515 4331.

Finally congratulations to Mike Hughes and Dave Fellows for finishing 3rd Gross and 3rd Nett respectively at the National Championship, held at Alwoodley Golf Club, and to the Midland Region for winning the Team Trophy.

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year from the Midland Section.

Sean McDade

East of England

October 21 was the date of the Section’s final golf meeting of the year and was held at Boston Golf Club. The day was attended by only 15 greenkeepers and seven trade members. Our thanks go to Bruce Hicks and his team for the course and to Boston Golf Club for allowing us to see the club’s facilities.

The day was sponsored by Nigel Lovatt, from Toro, and thanks go to him for the prizes on the day. The winners were: 1. Russ Moody, 39pts; 2. T. Shinkins, 30pts; 3. Jack Fairman, 30pts. The trade/guest prize was won by D. Coupland, 32pts. Longest Drive: S. Dickinson. Nearest the Pin. Russ Moody.

The order of merit for 2004 was also decided at Boston. The prize was still up for grabs but needed a mathematical miracle for anyone to catch the eventual winner, Russ Moody. Well done Russ, who has had by far the most consistent season, enjoy the glory Russ, your handicap has been cut for next year.

As the year is coming to an end I will take this opportunity to thank all the clubs that have allowed us to visit and have made us feel very welcome, also thanks to all the companies that have sponsored the events through the year, and the Trade members that turn out at every event and bring raffle prizes and to the members that come and support these events.

All of these people play an important part of making these events successful but more support from greenkeepers around the Section could make them even better.

Planning is under way for next season and we are currently looking for venues for the season, so if you have any ideas where we can play or would like to offer your course please let me know ASAP on 07702 435122.

As a committee we are always looking for new ideas on events that could be held and we are trying to organise an educational seminar in the winter. More input from Section members would help us pick subjects that are relevant and of interest to you all. So please help us out with some communication and try to support your Section as much as possible.

Les Howkins

Mid Anglia

Hi folks, here’s the latest news from our Section. October 27 saw almost 40 members descend on Woburn Golf & Country Club to thrash around in their glorious trees and enjoy the splendour of the Duchess course. A great day was had by all, due to the impressive work of Chris Hunt and his team, and all the helpful bar staff and waitresses. It really was a treat to walk the same course where so many great pro’s had played before (although I think we found some places the pro’s never found!).

The results were as follows: 1. Gary Boulton, Dunstable Downs; 2. Nigel Phelan, St Andrews Hospital; 3. Mathew Reed, Brocket Hall. Longest Drive. Neil Pestle, Brocket Hall. Nearest the Pin. Richard Goddard, Ashridge.

The whole day was sponsored by DFL/Sed-Nassau, so big thanks go to them and everyone else involved in the day.

BIGGA’s very own John Pemberton was our guest for the day and he gave a short speech all about what was happening at HQ and generally, on the whole, that it’s a good time to be a greenkeeper and a member of BIGGA.

Woburn was also the venue for our AGM, which as usual was quiet but very well attended. Everyone on the committee was voted back on for another year, aside from poor old Steve Mason, who turned up late on the day. We have now a fresh new committee to help us through our new year. I guess the only real change this year is that with the new AGM format we have now gone from 4 pages to 2, with the same information as before, in a much neater format.

Simon Apps an introduction and thanks to everyone for their input this year. The day then moved on to our ‘Q & A’ session, which was brilliant as always.

Sue Irwin spoke about the change to the regulations on how we should deal with certain issues. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with us.

Sue also gave us the opportunity to have a ‘ring’ any of the council members to have a one to one meeting with them on any issues we felt were pertinent to our Section.

Andrews Hospital; 3. Mathew Reed, Brocket Hall. Longest Drive. Neil Pestle, Brocket Hall. (I hope you are not kipping in Lyra Jones’ old bedroom or I’ll have to kill you). Lee, if you read this ring me on the following, I’d love to catch up with you, 0121 515 4331.

Finally congratulations to Mike Hughes and Dave Fellows for finishing 3rd Gross and 3rd Nett respectively at the National Championship, held at Alwoodley Golf Club, and to the Midland Region for winning the Team Trophy.

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year from the Midland Section.

Sean McDade

SOUTH EAST

Surrey

Due to Surrey Section not having an autumn golf competition, there is little to report on this month, except to welcome back, after a break of 18 months, Ian Jennings, who has taken control at Wimbledon Common GC as Head Greenkeeper. Ian, who was at Esher & Thames Ditton GC for more years than one can remember, is pleased to be back and would like to buy a drink for any of his old friends if they are able to catch him on payday.

Please also congratulate Anne Farley, who gave birth to Jon Anton Lee, 8 lbs 5 oz, on August 26. Her husband, Darren, RAC GC, looked remarkably well.

A report on the Turkey Trot tournament and AGM, at Laleham GC, on December 2 will appear in the January edition.

Since my last report in the October edition, I have, as some of you know, been on holiday in China. The two week tour was fascinating and included a 400 mile cruise on the Yangzi River, three internal flights, visits to the terracotta soldiers, Tiananmen Square, the Great Wall, at least 50 palaces and temples, a silk factory, a jade factory, a very brief hello from a Madame in one of those bars, a foot massage (yes, foot) and finally a shopping expedition to Bob’s Golf shop in Beijing.

Bob, like most of the Chinese we met, had a wonderful sense of humour, spoke good English and insisted that all his products for sale were as genuine as the Rolex watch I had bought the day before. Needless to say, my brother-in-law, Paul, and I saw through this sales ploy and left empty handed, apart from the dozen Callaway shirts and the latest Taylormade R5 driver. The Taylormade R7 driver made us a little suspicious as to its authenticity when the moveable weight system in this Chinese version refused to move.

And finally, good luck to Tony Worsfold, Head Mechanic at the RAC GC, who, in addition to other duties, looks after the club’s veteran vehicles. The 1903 Mors enters, once again, the London to Brighton veteran race and Tony will be there to ensure that it makes it to the finish.

Bill Willmott

London

The London Section hosted its first education seminar under the new committee at Porters Park Golf Club, last month. Although the quality of speakers were excellent, the turn out to listen to them did not reflect this. I agree that everyone must start somewhere, and this maybe is the start of something to build on, however, I do not see 22 members out of a possible 197 being successful.

These notes are the only real chance to get messages across to our Section members so I need to use them constructively and honestly, if we are to realise our goal of becoming a strong and organised Section. We want to reach out to all levels of greenkeepers, from the apprentice up to the Course Manager so when you read these notes, call me with any feedback or ideas that can benefit everyone in our Section.

Enough ranting, and back to Porters Park. A very special thanks to all our speakers, who were Rob Phillips, Duncan McGilvary, Katie Wills, Billy McMillan and the ever enthusiastic Frank Newbery. A wide range of areas were covered with the importance of communication and benefits of education standing out, as well as Billy’s philosophy of keeping it simple. Many thanks to Porters Park as well for the use of the clubhouse and lovely lunch that was laid on.

I must also add that it was great to see our new Regional Administrator, Clive Osgood, there and, personally, I hope we get a lot more opportunity to meet with Clive and I am sure the whole Region will benefit from Clive’s knowledge and experience.

Next month we will have the results from our turkey trot, being played at Ashridge Park, as well as a report on our AGM, until then I’ll just keep picking up leaves!

Alec Macindoe 07780955817

East Anglia

62 members braved the weather forecasters prediction of a wet and windy day in the East Anglia area by making the journey to Ipswich to play in our October meeting at Rushmere Golf Club.

On arrival we were shocked to see the bar area covered off due to structural renovation and many of us were relieved to find out that in each corner of a lengthy bar there would be provision for us to acquire our favourite tipple.

Before golfing commenced egg and bacon rolls were served. Egg yolk on shirts became the hazard of the day. As for the weather forecast, the rain stayed away but there was a firm breeze blowing throughout the day, which was causing problems for some but not for others.

Once on the course it was evident to everybody how good a playing surface Pat
Swinn and his staff had produced through the year. After a number of dry years causing areas to suffer drought and fire (this is common land after all) everything was in very good shape. This was reflected in the abundance of good scores.

The bandits fared well as usual. Not in the least our Section Secretary which will be of no surprise to any of you! After a short word, prizes were presented by Rushmere Golf Club's Captain, Mr Brian Perkins. The overall winner with 44 Stableford points was N. Kidd. D-9 handicap section. 1. P Howard, 36 points; 2. M Birk, 35 points on countback; 3. A Carson, 35 points. 10-18 handicap section. 1. J Willett, 41 points; 2. M Turner, 38 points; 3. D Fanner, 35 points. 19-28 handicap section. 1. N Kidd, 44 points; 2. R Ransome, 38 points; 3. G Rayfield, 35 points.


The loo seat was won by someone who would normally not be associated with any calamity on the course and in this instance he was not! Peter Howard, as always, in the clubhouse busied himself selling raffle tickets (a favourite occupation of his). What he kept as a closely guarded secret was that it was his 60th Birthday. Unknown to him and the majority of members, his wife, daughter, son-in-law and grand daughter, Kate, were being ushered through the clubhouse to an area where they could prepare a birthday cake for a presentation in full view of the golf club.

Resounding applause greeted a speechless Peter, who still managed to blow out ALL the candles! Still in a state of surprise Peter said a few words cumulating in an offer of a drink on his tab, and for many this was as welcome as the piece of his cake, which I have to say was lovely. So for his failed attempt at secrecy he was presented with the loo seat.

Many thanks to all our sponsors. The main sponsors of the day were Tomlinson Groundcare, who supplied all golfing prizes, and not forgetting all those who donated prizes to the raffle; Attentor Bernard, John Dee, Atkins, Batum Mowers, Texton, Toro UK, Consult Clarkson, Vitax Scotts UK, Sheriff Amenity, Ben Burgess and Rigby Taylor. Despite relaxed dress code the majority of members still wore a jacket and tie, as one would expect from a professional organisation such as ours. A standard we should always adhere to.

As you may be aware from our last AGM all venues have been booked for 2005 and for your information all venues for 2006 have been provisionally booked. This shows that as a Section we are in good stead for future events, showing a positive attitude toward the Association from clubs in our area.

Many thanks to Colin Rushbrooke, our Section President, for his time in liaising with prospective golf clubs and to Ian Willett, our Section Secretary, for following through with firm bookings and organisation.

Hope to see you all at Thorpeness Golf Club on Wednesday December 15 (please note change of date) for our Christmas Texas Scramble and AGM.

Steve Millard

SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES

The South West and South Wales Region would like to thank Amenity Technology for once again sponsoring the visit to BTME. This year will see the accommodation and for your information all venues for 2006 have been provisionally booked. This shows that as a Section we are in good stead for future events, showing a positive attitude toward the Association from clubs in our area.

The next Section meeting is the Christmas event at Kingsdown, on December 8. Kingsdown is a superb hilltop course with dry walking, so with bacon rolls and coffee, a brisk game of greensomes, the Christmas meal & raffle, and a bargain cost of £16, lets support our sponsors and have a really good day.

A final word of warning - if I don't get plenty of info for next month, you'll be hearing all about my holidays or something equally boring!

Paul Worster, 01285 651908 / 07768 394593. paul.worster@tesco.net

Paul Worster

South Coast

As I sit here writing these notes I can hear a crescendo of fireworks. The sky is lit up by another cascading rocket, no doubt followed by the inevitable “oooh’s” and “ahhh’s” from spellbound children. Yes it’s bonfire night. It seems incredible that another year has passed and Christmas is almost here.

Winter programmes are in full swing and preparations for staff Christmas parties are finalised. Staff parties are always a great time and ours is always a topic of conversation for weeks after, particularly with the General Manager after she receives the bar bill! This is where our communication skills are put to good use. Frank Newberry skills in training us to be effective communicators and this covers every eventuality, thanks Frank!

We have one of the most enthusiastic Secretaries ever. But even they can't run the Section well if they don't have our support.

Inventing that blasted silly yellow handicap hasn't stopped him, so perhaps chopping the head off his driver will slow him down. However, if that fails......

Full results were: 1. Paul Godwin, Kendleshire, Nobby Knight, Marlborough, Robin Greaves, Countrywide Farmers, 105 pts; 2. Tim Needham, Chipping Sodbury, 104 pts; 3. Elliot Nicholls, Cotswold Hills, Andy Akerman, The Orchard GC, Chris Sealey, Chippingham, 85 pts.

Many thanks to Chipping Sodbury for the courtesy of the course and looking after us so well - special thanks to Clive, John, Tim, Anthony and the team for the presentation of the course which was just outstanding given the weather conditions and the time of year.

At the AGM, all officers were re-elected, apart from David Bougen who steps down after several very successful years as Fixtures Secretary. Many thanks Dave for arranging so much quality golf. Gay Woods carries on in Education, and continues our partnership with Training Express. One example of Gay's expertise was the recent Training Day at Bath GC, which was so successful. Give Gay a ring on 01225 333928 to discuss any specific training needs.

The fireworks display has finished and on Sky Sports is golf from Atlanta Georgia. East Lake is the host of the Tour Championship and a golf course I was very fortunate to visit when I travelled with the BIGGA Delegation, sponsored by Bernard, two years ago. It looks different to the course we walked which was in dormancy at the time of our visit.

The successful representatives for the next Delegation in February have now been informed and we have to pass on our congratulations to Tim Rockey, of Parkstone Golf Club, for being chosen. I know Tim was very disappointed last year when he missed out but was determined to push this disappointment to one side and apply again this year. His determination was rewarded and should be an example to all of those who have been unsuccessful this year. I know Tim will have a fantastic, but hard, week in Orlando and I look forward to hearing all about his trip.

Some more good news from Parkstone, Paul and Jackie Cooper have been blessed with a beautiful daughter, Elouise. Congratulations to you both and by the time you read this I'm sure Elouise will have settled down and you will be able to get some sleep.

I did mention last month that I would give details of the section AGM. The meeting ran very smoothly and lasted 20 minutes. The committee has stayed the same with the inclusion of two new members, Chris Bitten and Kevin Gray. We are always keen to welcome new members to the committee and if you wish to mould the future of the Section and Association then it's a great starting point. If you are interested then please contact me.

I can't write it properly unless I've got some actual news. This is your opportunity to share problems, information, and news, any issues however small - send them and I'll include them. One thing we greenkeepers don't do so well is share information and ask advice, so now's the chance.

You have a set of Section officers unsurpassed in recent times, and in Nobby Knight we have one of the most enthusiastic Secretaries ever. But even they can't run the Section well if they don't have our support.

So let's get one or two things straightened out. This is not my column, it's your column. I can't write it properly unless I've got some actual news. This is your opportunity to share problems, information, and news, any issues however small - send them and I'll include them. One thing we greenkeepers don't do so well is share information and ask advice, so now's the chance.

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South Wales

A great day was had at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club, where 32 windswept golfers took part in the autumn golf day. Thanks go to Keith M in the Mowers for their kind sponsorship and for supplying an excellent prize table. The course was in superb condition, David please accept and pass on our thanks to you and your team for their efforts. The prizes were taken by: 1. Andy Roach; 2. Rees Thomas; 3. Peter Lacey, who narrowly beat Angus Macleod on count back.

Our next match will take place at Pyle and Kenfig Golf Course on December 10, hopefully you will have received this by then, please make every effort to come but be warned early booking is essential as this is a popular day. To book contact Peter Lacey. Next year's fixtures will be published in early 2005, they will be forwarded on to you.

Kerry Jones

Northern Ireland

Firstly this month I would like to once again thank our very generous sponsors who supported the Section's golf days throughout this year. They are Kevin and Cahill Gates, from Ultra Plant Spreaders, Columns of Banbridge, Scotts Sands of Toomebridge and Brodericks Machinery at Mallusk. Your support is greatly appreciated by our members.

The AGM will take place at Fort William GC in December. The exact date will soon be finalised. Our Section committee would like to see a good attendance at our AGM and hopefully a few new faces will come onto the committee for 2005.

The National Championship was once again well supported by greenkeepers from Royal Co Down GC. Noel Crawford, Eamonn Crawford and son, Gary, were joined by Michael King on the annual trip in early October. The venue this year was near Leeds at Alwoodley GC. Many congratulations go to Noel Crawford, who once again lifted the Scratch Champion prize for the two days. Noel had a total score of 152, an excellent performance on a very difficult heathland course. Basically Noel steps off the plane at Leeds/Bradford Airport and onto the first tee without a practice round and little time for adequate preparation. Noel has won the Gross prize three times in the last five years, his performance on a very difficult heathland course is a tremendous achievement. Noel's brother, Eamonn, won the best Gross prize on day two with a 74 and Eamonn's son, Gary, won the best nett prize also on day two. The guys from Royal Co Down would like to thank all at BIGGA and their fellow players for the hospitality and kindness shown towards them.

As a result of their fine performance at the National Championship Noel and Eamonn were selected to play for the BIGGA Team against the Combined Services at the Berkshire Golf Club in late October and a full report of how they got on can be found in this magazine.

Andrew Ferguson, from Brodericks Machinery at Mallusk, very generously provided sponsorship of £250 to assist with Noel and Eamonn's travelling expenses over to the Berkshire. Many thanks to Brodericks for their generous support.

Well that is about all my news for this month, I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.

Ken Henderson