and Earnest Doe.
All the prizes were presented by Dave Tyres, the Club Captain, and we we thank Newmarket Golf Club for their hospitality. A truly memorable day.

Mick Lathrope

Kent

So here it is Merry Christmas!
At the time of writing this report our annual extravaganza of Turkey Trot and AGM at Birchwood Park is yet to come but eagerly anticipated by a remarkable number of early entrants. I shall take that as a compliment, Thank you.

One of the items that will have been discussed at the AGM, which was highlighted in a separate letter sent to all of you with the agenda, was a notification that we are actively seeking persons to help us organise educational events and training courses for you all wherever demand exists. I sincerely hope that we are able to find a willing soul, as providing relevant and current training for you all is one of the fundamentals of each Section remit.

Much education comes by way of effective communication. This is something we have recently improved significantly by launching a re-vamped website at www.kentgreenkeepers.com I am on a very steep learning curve on running websites so please excuse the odd area that requires improvement. I wanted to get something out on the net as quickly as possible in order to facilitate direct interaction. More will follow and on a regular basis.

One thing that is a priority for me on the webpage is an area where we recognise the invaluable generosity of our sponsors. At the moment we have listed who they are but I shall, when I learn how, provide a link via their logos to their individual websites. Meantime, thanks to all of them for their support and patience! I sincerely hope you will be able to provide similar support for us next year.

I have heard on the grape vine that Roland Hughes, Course Manager at Forrester Park Golf Club, has been ill and has spent some time in hospital, I understand he is home now and we wish him a speedy recovery.

This month’s news is extremely short I’m afraid.
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The New Chairman and Committee will have been elected and the Christmas bash at Orsett GC will be over by the time you read this. I will have all the news and results by the next issue.

Have a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

If you do have any news for the website or for GK International, please contact me on 07764 862 337 or via email essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer

Essex

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Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer
**Harrogate Week 2010**

BTME and Clubhouse Exhibitions - Tuesday 19 – Thursday 21, January, 2010

**Visit the Membership Services Team on the BIGGA Stand**

Come and chat with us on the BIGGA Stand, renew your membership, bring your colleague along to join or simply receive advice and guidance to help you get the most out of your membership.

Remember all members receive a one-year subscription to Greenkeeper International. Look out on the BIGGA website for membership offers at the Show.

**Don’t miss the BIGGA Social Night – Wild West Bonanza, The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate**

Join us on Tuesday 19, January 2010, from 7pm and be transported into the wild and woolly past of the American Wild West.

Try your hand at poker and replicate Wild Bill Hickok’s legendary Dead Man’s Hand, a pair of aces and a pair of eights, all black, but beware he was shot dead holding this hand!

The BIGGA Western Saloon offers a Saloon Bar Shootout, Tin Can Alley and the infamous Bucking Bronco, with plenty of arcade game machines and eight luxury full size casino tables this promises to be a wild west night than even Jesse James would not forget!

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**Save money if you pay for your own BIGGA membership!**

Are you one of the 31% of BIGGA members who pay for their own membership subscriptions? If the answer is ‘yes’, then you can claim tax relief on your annual membership subscription.

**When you can get tax relief for professional fees and subscriptions**

The HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) website states that if an employee pays for their own professional fees and subscriptions then they may be able to reduce their tax bill by getting tax relief on any professional fees and subscriptions they pay.

If you are working as a

a) greenkeeper, a groundsman or are involved in the fine turf industry, and

b) you are a member of BIGGA and

c) pay for your own annual membership subscription then you may be able to deduct the cost of the membership subscription from your taxable income and reduce the amount of tax you pay. The HMRC recognise that membership of BIGGA is helpful to your job and BIGGA’s activities are relevant to your work.

BIGGA have been approved by the HM Customs and Excise and we appear on their approved list http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/list3.htm

It is possible for a person to go back several years to get tax relief.

**How to get tax relief**

BIGGA produce an easy to complete Tax Relief Claim Form for members to fill in and send to their local tax office, instructions are clearly given on the form but your membership team are always here to help if you have any queries.

Download a form from the BIGGA website, www.bigga.org.uk select ‘Members’ from the options across the top, select ‘Tax Relief Forms’ from the menu on the left, here you can download the form. Or contact a member of the Membership Team at BIGGA HQ to send you a copy.

**Regional Offices**

**Scotland & Northern Ireland**

Pete Boyd
Tel: 0141 616 3440
Mobile: 07779 243210
pete.boyd@btinternet.com

**Northern & Midland**

Peter Larter
Tel: 01788 550115
Mobile: 07866 366966
peterlarter@btinternet.com

**South East**

Clive Osgood
Tel: 01737 819343
Mobile: 07941 948410
cloveygood@yahoo.co.uk

**South West & Wales**

Jane Jones
Tel: 01454 270850
Mobile: 07841 948110
janajones11@btconnect.com

**South East Region**

Jake Boardman, Surrey
Bob Carrick, East Anglia
James Ellis, Kent
Jamil Faekkair, Surrey
Andrew Gill, Surrey
John Hockley, Surrey
Nick Hollin, Surrey
Mark Hollingsworth, Essex
Patrick Kidd, Surrey
Craig Marshall, East Anglia
Michael Pointer, Surrey
Aaron Robertson, Surrey
Jamie Sedgwick, Surrey
Alan Walker, Essex
Robert Walters, Surrey
Ryan Wall, Surrey

**SW/SW Region**

Jacob Armal, South West
Ian Clarke, South Coast
Greg O Reilly, Devon & Cornwall
Simon Skatt, South Coast
Mik Wells, South Coast
Craig Williams, Devon & Cornwall
Craig Williamson, South Coast
James Wright, South West

**Northern Ireland**

Ross Burns

**International**

Justin Ruiz, USA

**BIGGA welcomes the following new members**

**Scottish Region**

Ian Carr, North
Simon Gunning, West
Aidan Leen, Ayrshire
Anke Perginis, Central
Sindee van den Brink, North

**Northern Region**

Ashley Browse, Northern
Christopher Green, Northern
Will Holmes, Northern
William Price, North Wales
Stephen Wors, Northern

**Midland Region**

Christian Brain, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Stefan Carter, East Midland
Dean Gregory, Mid Anglia
Lewis Mathioux, Mid Anglia
John Morrison, Mid Anglia
Jonathan Taylor, Mid Anglia

**South East Region**

Peter Tuckett, Berks Buck’s & Oxon

**Midland Region**

Peter Larter, Northern

**South East Region**

South Coast

**Scottish Region**

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Greenkeepers Support Services
0800 174 319

Debt Counselling Helpline
0800 174 319

**OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS**

(Pull Members only)

**Personal Accident Helpline**

02075 603013

**Greenkeepers Legal Assistance**

0800 177 7891

**Greenkeepers Support Services**

0800 174 319

**Debt Counselling Helpline**

0800 174 319
Nigel Wyatt of MJ Abbott comes under the spotlight

1. What is your position within the company?
Contracts Director, MJ Abbott Limited

2. How long have you been in the industry?
31 years

3. How did you get into it?
I left school at 16 and started working for Mike Abbott. It was the lure of all that machinery! After a year I attended courses at Lackham College in Chippenham with the view to becoming a farm manager. On completion Mike was keen to get me back. The rest, as they say, is history!

4. What other jobs have you done?
I worked on my father's farm and delivered milk. We used to bottle our own milk. I still have some glass milk bottles with my grandfather's name on them, ET Wyatt & Sons.

5. What do you like about your current job?
I relish a challenge and every project we're involved in poses its own challenges. I like the variety of work, travelling and visiting interesting places, and meeting people.

6. What changes have you seen in the industry?
We work with the agricultural community in the South West but our staff work across the UK and overseas. The industry has become tightly regulated and from H&S safeguards to being CHAS registered, there's a lot more to being a good contractor now. Tools and machinery have come in that enable us to do a better job. When this hasn't happened, our workshop has built or modified kit.

7. What do you like to do in your spare time?
I get out and ride my motorbike, an Aprilia RSVR Factory - it's fast! Equally enjoyable is a Saturday morning visit to the local butcher...on my retro scooter...very Jamie Oliver!

8. Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?
I'd love to have a smallholding, a Range Rover and a Porsche! Dreams aside, I'll probably still be at MJ Abbott!

9. Who do you consider to be your best friends in the industry?
I've made many friends but without doubt, my wife.

10. What do you consider to be your lucky number?
Anything over a million!

11. Pick a number.
48

Nigel has picked Tim Webb of Tacit
Turfdry has been a specialist in golf course drainage since 1995 and has an excellent track record with over 50 golf courses throughout the UK, including well known clubs such as the Woburn Golf & Country Club.

The firm offers a comprehensive service including: detailed topographical surveys; drainage assessment and design; construction of ponds, other water features and drainage ditches; installation of plastic pipe drainage systems; and the unique Turfdry Drainage System using Hydraway Sportsdrain, a US designed and manufactured fin drain for which Turfdry is the sole approved UK installer.

Independent customer satisfaction surveys have shown Hydraway Sportsdrain to be an excellent alternative to conventional plastic pipe drainage schemes and it has been widely utilised to solve drainage problems on fairways, tees and clay-based greens - where it offers a cost effective long-term solution to rebuilding. The Turfdry (Greens) Drainage System involves the installation of Hydraway Sportsdrain at two metre centres, connected to a traditional plastic carrier drain which takes the drainage water to a suitable outfall (ditch, pond, pipe or soakaway). Following a successful trial on the New Course at Sunningdale GC, the system was commissioned for several other greens on the New and Old courses at Sunningdale where drainage performance has been dramatically improved without altering the traditional nature of the greens. As a result of the success of the schemes at Sunningdale and other prestigious courses the Turfdry (Greens) Drainage System has now been installed at more than 20 courses throughout the UK.

Turfdry operates throughout the UK from its base in Derbyshire. Most projects carried out by the firm are on a design and construct basis, with completed contracts in 2009 ranging in value from £5,000 to over £250,000.

Contact Details:
Telephone / Fax: 01283 551417
Email: enquiries@turfdry.com
Website: www.turfdry.com

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1/2 page - £790
Full page - £1500

Visit www.bigga.org.uk and check out the latest chat from the greenkeeping industry

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Puzzle Answers on page 69

CROSSWORD

Across
1. Who was the Blackburn forward who transferred to Manchester City at the start of this season?
2. Which female athlete won the 100 metres, 200 metres and anchored the American 400 metre relay team to gold in the 1960 Rome Olympics?
3. Which football team formation is named after a piece of foliage brought out at this time of year?
4. Who won the US Women’s Open in 1997?
5. What does the fifth day in the song 12 Days of Christmas and the Olympics got in common?
6. What is the name of Stephen Hunt’s brother who used to played with him at Reading?
7. Which lake in the middle of Hyde Park is traditionally the venue for a Christmas Day swim?
8. Which Christmas related destination is an anagram of DALPLAN?
9. What was the name of the Simpson’s greyhound?

Down
1. Street whose residential buildings were originally stables (4)
2. Insect between larva and adult stages (4)
3. Precarious, not firm (8)
4. Joie de vivre (10)
5. Having a high price; resulting in sacrifice (6)
6. “Reactive programming” usually applied to spreadsheet software (8)
7. Capital of Haiti (4-2-6)
8. Frozen rain pellets (4)
9. Crosspiece forming step of ladder (4)

QUICK ‘NINE HOLE’ QUIZ

1. Who was the Blackburn forward who transferred to Manchester City at the start of this season?
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MONSTER SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 4x4 box contains the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.

SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 9 box shape contains the numbers 1 to 9.
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Recruitment

The Hurlingham Club is a prestigious private members’ club situated on the banks of the River Thames in Fulham, SW London. Outdoor sports facilities include 30 grass tennis courts, a cricket ground, summer putting greens and a winter pitch and putt golf course and over one hectare of fine turf surfaces consisting of 10 croquet lawns and two bowling greens.

A vacancy has arisen among our 24 strong grounds team for a Grounds Supervisor who will be predominantly responsible for the maintenance of the croquet and bowls surfaces as well as involvement in all other turf surfaces as and when required.

The ideal candidate will have significant experience at supervisory level with direct involvement in, and appropriate technical knowledge of, fine turf and in particular golf green turf management to a very high standard.

The Club provides excellent support in terms of machinery and other equipment and materials and offers a very competitive salary with additional overtime and benefits to the right candidate. We regret that there is no accommodation offered with this position.

Applications should be sent to:
Peter Craig
The Grounds Manager
The Hurlingham Club
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SW6 3PR
Email: peter.craig@hurlinghamclub.org.uk
The closing date for applications is Thursday 31 December 2009

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Quick ‘Nine Hole’ Quiz Answers:

1. Roque Santa Cruz
2. Wilma rudolph
3. Christmas tree
4. Alison nicholas
5. Five gold rings
6. noel
7. The Serpentine
8. Lapland
9. Santa’s Little Helper
One Saturday morning back in October I had Just returned from the golf club. As usual I suspected that the course was probably in reasonably good nick but all I saw as I went round were the things which could be better - the curse of the Course Manager.

Never mind, get the wet socks off and put the kettle on, the world will seem a better place after that.

My 20-year-old daughter looked chirpy and well after another night on the town (I vaguely remember when I could do that) and with a good-morning smile handed me my post and a cup of tea.

The BIGGA mag and a cup of tea on a Saturday morning, what could be better?

I tore off the polythene to tip out the bumph.

Ah, what’s this? Continue To Learn education programme 2010.

Anything new and different? Is Frank on? God bless Frank.

I skim through. Ah ha! - Wednesday morning 8.20 to 10.30, 2mm mowing, fescue/bent et al.

We are invited to discuss and debate the merits of 2mm and 5mm mowing and ‘the issues involved to succeed with each’. ‘To succeed with each’! My heart sinks. I ask myself, ‘What is there left to debate?’ This seems to be self indulgence of the highest order.

The news puts me in something of a dilemma. At a time when all industries are seeking to minimise global damage for the sake of our children’s future, should we as a profession be hosting a debate which suggests that we might wish to consider mowing even lower?

I am all for free speech and defend the right of any greenkeeper to maintain their course as they see fit but for any practice which could have far-reaching consequences for our profession I would want two reasonably sound scientific theories backed up by evidence.

We seem to be 50% short.

Now I know that professionalism has taken a bit of a dive these days, with the ‘Hand of Henri’ and In Eduardo’s case, quite literally, as he did his dying swan act in the Celtic penalty box, but surely professional greenkeepers should not need to be debating the merits of 2mm mowing.

The thought that we should contemplate heading into the next decade on the basis of ultra low-mown swards, with all their attendant high cost, high maintenance, high input, high irrigation and pesticide requirement is hardly the socially responsible thing to do and gives a very false impression of the environmentally aware state of the British greenkeeping profession today. Why are we debating it? The logic escapes me.

The noble profession of greenkeeping is the sound practice of preparing perennial sport turf grasses for the game of golf.

The act of routine mowing at 2mm constitutes the stressing out of perennial sport turf grasses in favour of a weedgrass, a bastardisation of the profession. What’s to debate?

Ah well, the tea was refreshing and my feet have warmed up. The wife has fed the rabbits and we are off to do the weekly at Tesco’s.

As usual, I will point out all the cheap items that taste just as good and she, the professional shopper, will tell me to read the label and see just how much salt, sugar and fat I would be pouring in to me and my daughter’s bodies and what the eventual outcome would be.

She is right of course. I don’t bother to debate the point. There is only one side to the argument and that does not constitute a debate.

I lure my daughter over to the array of CDs and tell her that they all sound the same today not like back in my day when we had The Beatles versus The Rolling Stones.

At last I have a debate and as she points out ‘As children are the product of their parents, if you win the debate you have failed as a parent.’

She has got me there. I console myself with the thought that while I may sometimes fail in my struggle to convert poa greens to fescue/bent, I have obviously not failed as a parent. The student has outwitted the teacher. That is as it should be, I have done a good job.

Roll on the football tonight and the weekly debate about divers and professionalism. The odd diver might win the game for his team occasionally but give me Ryan Giggs any day.

There’s a fescue/bent man if ever I saw one.

‘And if you tolerate this
Then your children will be next
Will be next, will be next, will be next’