



News from the Chief Executive

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 in 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 on this 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 note that BIGGA HOUSE will be closed between Christmas Eve and January 4, staff being obliged to take some of their annual holiday at this time. An emergency telephone number will, however, be left on the answering machine which in itself will be regularly checked. Lets hope 2005 is a drier year, on the few occasions that I played golf in 2004 I more often than not seemed to get wet. Perhaps someone is trying to tell me something!

John Pemberton



Peter Boyd
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SCOTTISH REGION

Ayrshire

Hello once again, hope you're all well and have got off to a good start on your winter projects. The machinery demonstration/AGM day went well with a good turnout on what proved to be a bitterly cold day. Our thanks to Hamilton Bros for their efforts in displaying a wide variety of their inventory and entertaining PowerPoint presentations. Thanks also to Jim Paton for his part in organising this successful event. The AGM portion was efficiently dispatched under the auspices of Secretary Derek Wilson and outgoing Chairman Martin Lothian. Derek, it was unanimously agreed, should continue as Secretary while Marshall Sloss takes over as Chairman with Stephen Higgins his Vice-Chairman.

Tumberry's Brian Aitken has been recognised by Langside College with an award for outstanding achievement for his recently completed HNC in Golf Course Management. So on behalf of the Section, "Well done Big Bri!"

What have I been up to you ask? Well in October I went down to Leeds to play in the National Championship for the first time and after the first round I found myself leading! No really! Normal service resumed the next day and I played like a big girls blouse! I thoroughly enjoyed the two day event and would highly recommend it to anyone thinking of going.

Good news though, as I have recently been invited to go on the BIGGA Delegation, sponsored by Bernhards, to travel to Orlando in February. Come on! It was the first time I sent back the card that was in the magazine, so if you have been sceptical before maybe next year you should give it a go.

Y'all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year now, Y'Hear!

Phone me on 07939 104701 if you want.

Dennis Tweddell

Central

The Section AGM was held at the conference facilities at Elmwood Golf Course, on October 27, when 20 members (out of a membership of 240) made the effort to attend and we were treated to three excellent presentations prior to the AGM by Tim Earley, from Waste 2 Water, Fiona Miller, from The Scottish Golf Environment Group, and Douglas Shearer, from Elmwood College, due to the interest shown in each speaker the timetable for the day went completely out of the window.

Nevertheless a very constructive meeting took place when many issues were discussed and answers given to numerous questions put to the committee, answers to the questions unanswered will be sought from those who know. I won't tell you what the questions were because you should have been at the meeting to find out!

Following the meeting, Course Manager, Andrew Mellon, took us on a tour of his excellent newly constructed facilities, if you wish to visit them just 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 at 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, Deer Park Golf & Country Club; Vice Chairman, Deek Scott, Scoonie Golf Course; Past Chairman, Andy O'Hara, Leven Links;

Committee, Archie Dunn, Auchterarder Golf Club; Ian MacMillan, Murrayshall Hotel & Golf Course; Andrew Mellon, Elmwood Golf Course and Euan Grant, St. Andrews Links; Patron's Representative, Kevin Brunton, Greentech Sportsturf; 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 and those members who supported our events, to those of you who didn't, thanks anyway for being part of The Association!

Awrabestfurtwathoosananave.

John Crawford

North

Only one new member to report this month and this is Simon Donald who is an apprentice at Peterhead Golf Club. Welcome to the Section Simon.

The AGM was held at the Links in Aberdeen on October 14 and Dougal Duguid and Stuart McBain stood down from the committee. Our thanks go to these guys for all their



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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 caddy, 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 Aberdeenshire GC, and John Cavin, 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 bluenose 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 greenkeepers 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 McIclatchie, from Peterhead, is running the club. He can be contacted on 01779 470173.

The show at Scotsturf was held on November 10 and 11 and was a lot smaller a show than anything I have been to before at Scotsturf. 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 Harrogate 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 David McInroy 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 Duthie, Trade; Kenny Hunter, Trade. There are two new members, Stuart Taylor and Eddie McGee welcome aboard. I would like to thank Brian 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 Killeel 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, 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 at this sad time (see the letters page for a tribute to Bob).

This year's dinner has been a big sell out, we will try to get more tickets for next year. On a personal note it's a great honour and pleasure for me to be the Chairman of the West Section. I will do my best to represent the Section over the next two years.

Fraser Ross 07970 366 355

NORTHERN REGION

North West

October has been a reasonably quiet month for the Section, with no golf competitions to report on, although the National Championship was played at Alwoodley Golf Club on October 4 and 5, which is in the Northern Region.

Unfortunately only one member of the N/W Section grasped the opportunity to play this truly superb course, and that was Peter Hogan, who will receive £50 towards his costs from the Regional funds.

The environment award is once again up for grabs, and Wilmslow Golf Club has once again entered, so let's hope Steve Ultram and his team can pull it off this time. Wilmslow GC have in the past won the Regional award, so it is worthwhile to keep on trying.

Two members in the Section have increased their families, both with daughters.

Aidie Holt and his wife have a little girl named Cerys, and Duncan Smith and his wife have a little girl called Katie. All are doing well, and I suppose both dads are taking their turn at doing night shifts. How time flies, we will shortly have Christmas upon us, so in order for me to save money on cards and stamps I will wish you all a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

You can contact me on 0151 724 5412 or 07761 583357.

Bert Cross

Northern

Hi all. I must start this month with an apology for the lack of a report in last month's magazine, this was down to me sending it to the wrong email address.

September 15 saw the long awaited return of the match between the Northern Section and the Sheffield Section. The match was held at the fantastic Huddersfield Golf Club, and may I take this opportunity to thank everybody at Huddersfield for the superb course, food and hospitality on the day.

The result was a 3-3 draw but after looking back through the archives it was found that when the match was last played, some 25 years ago, the Northern Section were victorious so I'm pleased to say that as holders the trophy stops up here for another year. It has just been confirmed that next year's return match is going to be played at Hillsborough GC on July 13. A big thank you must go to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day, especially Mike Brear for his help in setting up the day.

The Autumn tournament and AGM was held at Low Laithes GC on October 13 and yet again the AGM was a huge disappointment with just 23 members from the Section attending. The golf, on the other hand, was a great success with the results as follows: DIV1. 1. Andy Clarke, 38; 2. Dave Collins, 36; 3. Andy Slingsby, 34. DIV2. 1. Frank Stewart, 38; 2. Roy Armitage, 33; 3. Adam Speight, 31. DIV3. John Watts, 40; 2. Simon Rothwell, 30; 3. Jo Baxter, 27. Thank you again to Alpha Amenity and Scotts UK who sponsored the event and for their support of the Section.

Congratulations to Chairman Andy Slingsby who, on November 4, made his television debut on local news programme Calendar. He found some stolen Shetland ponies wandering the fairways of Moor Allerton Golf Club and was interviewed following his heroic equine rescue. He promises to have a shave and do his hair before 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 work, he ran into a closed barrier, resulting in a shattered windscreen, among other things! 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!

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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 Headquarters 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 Holoran, 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 Teesside. Results of the Whitelaw Bowl held at Penrith on September 8: Tony Smith, Teesside 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 scorecard only twice! Comments were that if we converted the number of Tony's putts 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 (07989508878). 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 the 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 Brancepeth 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 Haztek 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 1984. The return match has already been arranged and will be played at Hillsborough GC on July 13 next year. We look forward to this encounter and we shall be determined to get our hands back on the trophy this time having home advantage.

Congratulations go out to our ex President, Ken Arnold, on a hole in one at the second hole 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

Ian 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 Arclid, based in Sharrocks as a Representative for the Kubota range of machinery.

Penybrlyn 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 caravan park 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 partying 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 coming to stop at the roadwork's temporary traffic lights when the car coming up behind him at about 40mph decided not to stop, Terry got shunted up the back and pushed across to the verge of the dual carriageway, 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 Tequiza 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 wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Mesen Cymru

Andrew Acorn acorngolf@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 6&5 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 Bindley 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 McGreal and his staff for presenting a superb golf course in such wet conditions.

Also thanks to the Steward and Stewardess 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 Bindley

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 mad 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. McGreal 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 'trifle'. Thanks also to Middleton Hall Anglers for making us so very welcome, we look forward to next year's match. Cheers Allan.

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.

Brian 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 Walls, Billy McMillan and the ever enthusiastic Frank Newberry. 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 cornered 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 tippie.

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

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. P. Heywood, 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: Neill 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 Lysa 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, Bocket Hall. Longest Drive. Neil Pestle, Bocket Hall. Nearest the Pin. Richard Goddard, Ashridge.

The whole day was sponsored by DFL/Seol-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 Mark Ellis and John Wells, who had previously stated that they'd be stepping down.

So once again we go on, lead by our Chairman, Steve Mason, to see what another year brings. By the time you read this Christmas will be on its way, we'll all be skint, but hey it's Christmas! So if the good Lord is willing and the creek don't rise I'll be writing again, real soon, but until then... merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Bob Butfoy

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 Perks. The overall winner with 44 Stapleford points was N. Kidd. 0-9 handicap section. 1. P. Howard, 36 points; 2. M. Buck, 35 points on countback; 3. A. Curson, 35 points. 10-18 handicap section. 1. I. 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.

Trade and Guest Prize. 1. N. Ashman, 38 points on countback; 2. B. Perks, 38 points. Nearest the Pin. You've guessed it..... I. Willett. Longest Drive. A. Scott.

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, once 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; Atterton Bernard, John Deer, Atkins, Batrum Mowers, Textron, Toro UK, Consult Clarkson, Vitax Scotts UK, Sherriff 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 Willet, 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 subsidised, instead of the transport, as in previous years. Reservations are for a three night stay. To make a reservation or to obtain details of prices please contact Jane Jones, South West and South Wales Regional Administrator on 01454 270 850 or mobile 07841948110.

South West

Hello Boys - I'm back!

Yes, after 12 years of that most painful of afflictions "Greenkeepers' Block", and mainly because we couldn't afford Marc Haring's professional fees, I'm back in the fold as Fixtures Secretary and Press Officer.

Actually, it was all a ghastly mistake - I was just nodding off in the back of the AGM when I thought someone said - "Who wants to fix the Secretary?" - I leapt to my feet to scream, "Yes I'll fix the Secretary all right. Inventing that blasted silly yellow ball game," My son was mentally scarred for life last year, losing the double-point scoring yellow ball with his first shot in anger. He's now taken to obsessively searching for things, day and night. I've had no end of broken nights as he sleepwalks into our room in the small hours, and blunders around in my drawers muttering "I know it's here somewhere, just another couple of minutes". But unfortunately by the time I realised it was actually a Fixtures Secretary they were after, the doors had been locked, Chris Sealey had bellowed "All In Favour" and the rest of the room thundered "AYE". So it was too late.

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.

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.

Section Meetings are not just "a day off work playing golf", they are so much more. I personally went home from Chipping Sodbury inspired by the condition and presentation of the course on that day, and determined to do better at my own club. To me it was a crying shame that more members weren't there to share that experience.

Of course Paul Godwin featured strongly in the prizes - again! Chopping his 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, Adam Matthews, Minchinhampton, Dave Rosselli, Minchinhampton, 86 pts; 3. Elliot Nicholls, Cotswold Hills, Andy Akerman, The Orchard GC, Chris Sealey, Chippenham, 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. Guy Woods carries on in Education, and continues our partnership with Training Express. One example of Guys' expertise was the recent Training Day at Bath GC, which was so successful. Give Guy a ring on 01225 333928 to discuss any specific training needs.

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 "oo's" and "ahh'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!

I have it on good authority that these notes are read by friends of the Section all over the world, it seems incredible but true. As we are bracing ourselves for the winter Alan Devlin, "Devo" to his mates, is busy sunning himself down under. No doubt the barbie is out and ready for Christmas dinner on the beach, oh what a life. G'day Devo! We look forward to seeing you next Christmas.

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 Bernhard, 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 Kevan Glass. 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.

The AGM reported the great success of the Section and it is not by luck or chance that we are such a great success. This is down to the hard work and dedication of your committee and the great support we receive from you all, long may it continue!

Make sure you support and attend again next year at our golf days and Section seminar, which will be held at Canford Magna Golf Club on February 24. We have another great line up of speakers and full details will be with you very soon, it will be another great day!

It gives me great pleasure in informing you that our new Regional Administrator has now been appointed. We wish Jane Jones a very warm welcome to the Association and we look forward to seeing her at many of our Section events.

Having spoken to Jane she is full of enthusiasm and will be a great asset to our Section and Association and, as she is a keen golfer, has every intention of playing in as many of our golf days as possible. We look forward to meeting you Jane!

It would be very remiss of me not to thank all of our sponsors for their valued support over the last year. We could not have such wonderful golf days and a great seminar without them. We really do appreciate your generosity and look forward to working with you all again next year.

I would also like to thank all of the staff at headquarters for all their hard work and help over the last year. They all work extremely hard on our behalf and, like many greenkeepers, get little thanks most of the time. They have certainly made my job a lot easier and it's much appreciated! Thank you.

It just leaves me to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. Make 2005 a great year!

Alex McCombie

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 Morgan 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



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, Coburns 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, which 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

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