



News from the Chief Executive

Plans for Harrogate Week 2006 continue to evolve and the booking forms for the education programme have already come into the office in improved numbers when compared with this time last year. The completion of the Queen's Suite has enabled the Association to offer exhibitors the opportunity to run fringe workshops and seminars and this has been well received. A separate booklet detailing these should have been delivered with this edition of Greenkeeper International.

BIGGA continues to place a great emphasis on education and in the 2004/2005 financial year it contributed £38,000 by way of individual member career development grants and subsidies to Region and Section education events. We never know everything and none of us should become complacent about continuing professional development (CPD).

I have now the opportunity to write in Golf Club Management, the official monthly publication of the Association of Golf Club Secretaries, and provided a broad background to BIGGA in their October edition. My next article, in January, will concentrate on the need for the employer to support ongoing education. All too often I find that the clubs that do nothing about developing the skills of their staff are those where the staff do not fully commit to ongoing education.

My congratulations also go to the 10 successful applicants who won a place on the trip to the GCSAA Show in 2006, as sponsored by Bernhard & Co. Sam McLean, from Bernhard, and I recently interviewed 22 members who we had short listed from the many dozens of applicants. The overall standard was extremely high and I hope that those who did not make the Delegation will try again next year, assuming of course that Bernhard & Co continue their sponsorship.

One of the 10, Keith Ratcliff, has good reason to feel pleased. Keith recently passed his final exams to become BIGGA's newest Master Greenkeeper. Keith, like many others, came into greenkeeping as a second career and has demonstrated that with hard work and determination it is possible to progress quite quickly to a high level.

November has seen me put quite a few more miles on my car in an effort to visit some of the Section and Region activities, as well as incorporate visits to trade companies in an effort to improve communications. It is clear to me that many members still do not appreciate the value of being a member or understand just what benefits they are eligible to receive. We will continue to promote these through Greenkeeper International, at Harrogate Week and at the Section Secretaries' meetings. If any member is in doubt about their membership benefits then they should contact either Rachael or Gemma in the Membership Services office at HQ.

Finally, I would remind members of the importance of supporting Harrogate Week. Many of you may be tired of reading my 'call to arms' for Harrogate, however I cannot stress too strongly the importance of this event to the finances of the Association. The exhibitors will come if the visitors come. This is YOUR Association and so I hope YOU will support it.

BIGGA has helped bring greenkeeping and greenkeepers a long way, now its future success rests with its members. Remind your Secretary/Club Manager that their Association (AGCS) also has a presence at the Show and encourage them to accompany you. There really is something for everyone!

John Pemberton

SCOTTISH REGION

The Scottish Region has several changes to announce in relation to Harrogate Week 2006. It has been decided to withdraw travel to and from the Conference venue at Harrogate. Having taken everything into consideration the Board has decided it is no longer practical or cost effective to continue with this service.

As in previous years Harrogate Week will provide Seminars and Workshops. Two day, one day and half day workshops will be available. The cost of these will be intimated nearer the time but it should be noted they are not part of the Scottish Region package. However there will be a series of Seminars run by Trade firms at which everyone is welcome to attend free of charge.

The Regional Administrator will continue to arrange and book accommodation for anyone who wishes to attend. The accommodation will, as usual, be the Moat House Hotel, Harrogate. The cost of three nights accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis in en-suite rooms on January 24, 25 and 26 2006 costs £155.00.

Once all accommodation has been confirmed the Regional Administrator can provide names of all attendees, this will allow members to contact each other, make travel arrangements and perhaps share the cost of travel. The Regional Administrator has already contacted the National Rail Help line, 0845 7 225 225, and has confirmed that competitive rates and lower cost travel is widely available.

Booking forms for accommodation at Harrogate Week 2006 are available from the Regional Administrator.

Peter J. Boyd, Regional Administrator

Ayrshire

Hope you're all keeping well and the weather has been kind as you start to tackle your winter work programmes. The AGM was held at Irvine GC on Thursday October 27 with a dozen in attendance. Derek Wilson was strong armed into staying on as Secretary. Marshall Sloss begins the second of his two year term as Chairman with Vice Chairman, Stephen Higgins, doing likewise.

Patrons' Award winners for the year are Dale Norquoy, Irvine GC, and Alistair Storrie, Beith GC. So, on the behalf of the Section, well done and enjoy your learning experience at Harrogate Week.

I can also report that our golf outings for 2006 will be held at Southernness GC and Western Gailes GC respectively.

Lauder College, in Dunfermline, will host the Scottish National Conference on March 8. Peter Boyd has arranged for some of the best in the business to speak and I encourage all who can attend to so as it is well worth it!

Thanks to Derek for lying on a few beers at the meeting and the sweets were nice too! Any news, call me on 07939104701.

Denis Tweddell

North

Well here we go the last Section news of the year, and my last Section news as Robert Patterson, of Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, is taking it over. So this leaves me to get on with my secretarial duties.

I was disappointed (from a greenkeeping point of view) to hear that some of my friends were leaving the trade and moving on to other things. They are Martin Cameron, from Moray GC, and Mike Reid, from Peterculter GC. So I would like to wish them both the very best of luck in their new ventures. I do hope this is not the start of a trend.

Some other members moving up the greenkeeping ladder are Mark Angus, who has stepped up from Assistant to Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Peterculter. So I would like to wish him all the best in his new position. It is especially pleasing for me as Mark is a good friend and also an ex-employee of mine at Newmachar.

We had some changes last month at my own club, with George Mitchell and Patrick Wood being made up to Head Greenkeepers. George on Hawkshill and Patrick on Swailend after a very successful six months trial. So all the best to them in their new positions. Also best wishes to Stephen Brown and Ross Macrae, who moved up to Deputy Head Greenkeepers, Ross with George on Hawkshill and Stephen with Patrick on Swailend.

There were a few changes this year at our AGM. Steve Sullivan has taken over from John Geddes as our Chairman with Hugh McLatchie as Vice Chairman. So I would like to wish them all the best of luck in their new position. Speaking about our new Chairman, Steve recently got married to Rosie so I would like to wish them all the best for the future and I believe they are on honeymoon in Portugal.

Two new members to welcome on to the Committee. Robert Patterson, who I mentioned at the start of the report, and Robert Hardie, of Craibstone. So good luck to them, we haven't found a job for Bob Hardie yet but we will.

Well that is about it, I would just like to again thank Ian Gunn for all his hard work with the Section news for most of the year.

Just one last thing, as this is the December report I would just like to take this opportunity to wish everyone at BIGGA HOUSE and all my fellow Section news reporters from all over the country a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. All the best for now.

Dale Robertson

East

October 2005 arrived in Scotland with a vengeance with record rainfalls being the order of the day. In the Borders during a 24 hour period the River Tweed burst its banks to cover 80% of St. Boswells Golf Course. When the floodwaters receded, bunkers had been washed out and the course was covered in debris washed down by the rain. A major clean up operation is currently underway.

Continuing with the water theme Melrose Golf Club has been busy during the past year with course alterations. Over the last decade the course has become progressively wetter and the drainage system, based on clay tiles in a rig and furrow system, simply has not coped. As a result the club asked the advice of the Scottish Golf Environment Group on how best to improve course drainage.

This request was made a couple of years ago and SGEG provided a report for the club. SNH and SGEG provided advice on bodies who could provide funding towards the costs and the first part of the plan, to drain the 5th hole, was jointly funded by SGEG and Melrose Golf Club. Since then drainage work has been carried out on the 9th hole.

In general all the works are there to slow down, attenuate, soak away and retain as much of the surface water run off as possible, rather than the direct positive systems that existed before. Swales and holding ponds, together with the correct inlet and outlet levels throughout the schemes form a type of cascading water feature, creating several environmental and biodiversity improvements as well as being pleasing on the eye.

All the excavated material from the ponds was used by forming gentle mounds and landscaped areas, some of which have been seeded with a wild flower mixture. The club would like to thank Head Greenkeeper, John Christie, for his enthusiasm and patience during these major renovations.

During October the annual Stewarts' Match between the East and the North East of England Sections was played at Eyemouth Golf Club. This resulted in a 4-2 win for the East team. Our thanks go to Eyemouth Golf Club, Mark Pagan and his team for presenting the course in first class condition and Stewarts Turf for their continued support of this match.

The East Section held their AGM on Wednesday November 2 with all roads leading to Wintetfeid Golf Club in Dunbar. The new committee is as follows: Chairman, G. Wood; Vice Chairman, I. Bell; Secretary/Treasurer, K. Hodges; General Committee, G. Greenwood, S. Ferguson, F. Forrest, T Murray and J. Neilson.

At the meeting two long serving members of the committee, Chris Yeaman and Stevie Dixon, announced that they would not be standing for re-election and with that came the end of an era. Chris and Stevie's involvement stretches back to CIGGA days and they have contributed 25 and 26 years respectively to the Association. On behalf of the Section I would like to thank them for all their hard work and effort over the past two and a half decades.

After the AGM a Texas Scramble was played for the Richard Aitken Trophy.

The winning team on the day was Chris Yeaman, Kenny Mail, Kevin Hodges and Gary Rodgers.

Finally if you have any news or views give me a call on 07831 855182 or email info@thorntreesamenity.co.uk

Mike Dooner

West

Well back to the same old wet weather but we can't complain after our fantastic summer. Our autumn outing was held over Cardross Golf Course and after a wet start the weather improved in the afternoon and I must admit it was the best round of golf I've played this year - I actually finished.

Once again there was a first class turnout with approximately 48 members in attendance. The course was in first class condition and congratulations to Davy Gall and his team. To the Captain and Committee for allowing us courtesy of the course and to the clubhouse staff for keeping us fed and watered, many thanks.

The results on the day were: Scratch winner. S Taylor, Kilmount. First Class. 1. A. Peace, Port Glasgow; 2. S. Balintyne, Cowglen; 3. J. Wilson, East Kilbride. Second Class. 1. D. Mckechnie; 2. S. Copland; 3. J. Steadward. Third Class. 1. C. Scott; 2. D. Reid; 3. S. Sheehan. Trade. D. Duthie. Very well done to all the prize winners.

The Greenkeepers played the Clubmasters in the annual challenge match at Helensburgh Golf Club during October. Gavin Jarvis was the captain on the day and he led his troops to victory. The match was nearly called off, as there was a lack of numbers, but after a few last minute phone calls we managed a team of 12. Thanks to Helensburgh for the use of the course and to Gavin and his staff for the good condition on the day as well as playing in the match.

The AGM was held at Haggis Castle on Thursday October 27. There were 48 members and trade in attendance. I was unable to attend due to other commitments, many thanks to Dougie McIntosh for standing in on the day. At present we are two members short and in need of an Education Convenor. If anyone is interested in joining the Committee please get in touch.

The day was sponsored by Rigby Taylor and Fairways. Rigby's had a first class presentation in the morning covering all aspects of their company. I would like to thank Davy Carson and his team for their continued support. To Fairways I would like to apologise for not being able to carry out their presentation, we will arrange something in the new year to make up for this.

During November we held an educational day at Renfrew Golf Club. There were 32 Greenkeepers in attendance. Many thanks to Richard Aitken for sponsoring the day.

There was a first class line up of speakers with John Hughes, from DLF Trifolium, on the many different grass seeds and their use within the fine turf market. Second up was John Grindrod speaking on Aquadine drainage systems, a new product on the market. I have used the product myself and it is working very well. It created a lot of interest during the talk with a few greenkeepers carrying out trials. Last but not least was Rex Kimberly, from Terralift, a company which has been around for a few years now. Rex spoke on the use of soil enhancers and their place in the market. These ranged from soil conditioners, organic products, etc.

My thanks to all the speakers for giving us a first class day. Hopefully we can arrange more of these for the future. Also a word of thanks to Derek Duthie, from Aitkens, who put the wheels in motion and to his hard work on the day setting up the room.

A quick word to Danny Samson, of Nairn and Brown. Danny hasn't been well recently but is now recovering. The Section wishes you all the best and hope to see you back at the outings, etc as soon as possible.

Harrogate Week 2006 is just round the corner. Peter Boyd is once again arranging the package for the Scottish Greenkeeper. As you have read the set up has changed slightly but is still a first class way to attend. Places go very quick so contact Peter as soon as possible if you want to attend.

Well I have just finished my first year as West Section Chairman and I must admit I've had a very enjoyable year. I would like to thank my Committee for their help and back up throughout the year and for their continued hard work running the Section for the members. Also to Peter Boyd for his support, which has been a great help.

As I have said in the past it's not easy doing Section reports when there's little input. So please, if you have any items you want in don't hesitate to get contact - 07970 366 355. That's all for now, more news next month, hopefully.

Fraser Ross



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NORTHERN REGION

North East

Well we have good news and bad news for the Section. Firstly the good news, congratulations to Graeme Lauder, Head Greenkeeper at Slaley Hall, and his wife, Karen, on the birth of their first baby. Other good things have happened for the pair, while Graeme was working on the course he was approached by Family Dining Survey to appear in the advert for Bisto, ahh.

Now for the bad news. Those of you who know Steve Pope will hope that he makes a quick recovery as, while he was playing golf at Tyneside GC, he slipped and broke his ankle pretty badly. Looks like no golf for a while.

The spring competition will be played at Prudhoe GC on April 27. Tee off time 10.45 to 11.30am, so be sharp as we do not have much teeing off time. Presently the green staff are constructing the 12th green, so we are unlikely to be playing it then, instead a temporary green will be in operation.

The autumn competition will be played at Stocksfield GC in September, date TBA shortly. Postcards will be sent out as usual. The match against the East of Scotland will be played at Bamburgh Castle GC on October 11. Anyone who is interested in playing please let me know either in the spring or autumn competitions.

Anyone who has any news they want put in let me know, bearing in mind I have to have it by the 5th of the month. So its not easy providing news if you don't have any sent to you.

Jimmy Richardson

North West

As I write, Bert is in sunny Africa, I bet he has better weather than us. We have not had much in the way of information this month, except to say that I will be compiling the Section notes from now on.

This will ease the burden on Bert and enable him, hopefully, to continue as Section Secretary for a little longer. By the time you read this we will have had our AGM and can look forward to next year's tasks.

If you have any information or gossip that you would like other members to share please contact me as follows. Tel: 0151 2894625; email: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk.

On behalf of all the North West Section Committee I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and successful New Year.

Chris Sheehan

Cleveland

Not too much to report this month. Firstly, don't forget to get in touch with Pembo or Jamie Applegarth, of Rigby Taylor, if you fancy a paintball experience. Secondly, the TSL quiz will take place at Mount Oswald Golf Club on Wednesday December 7 starting at 7.30pm. A drink, a hot snack and a warm welcome awaits. Please come along and help defend the title we won last year.

A correction from last month's notes - Barry Walker's quiz at Teesside Golf Club is Wednesday February 8 - not the 5th. I hope all you lads with tree-lined courses are coping with the perennial problem of the falling leaves - they are such a pain!

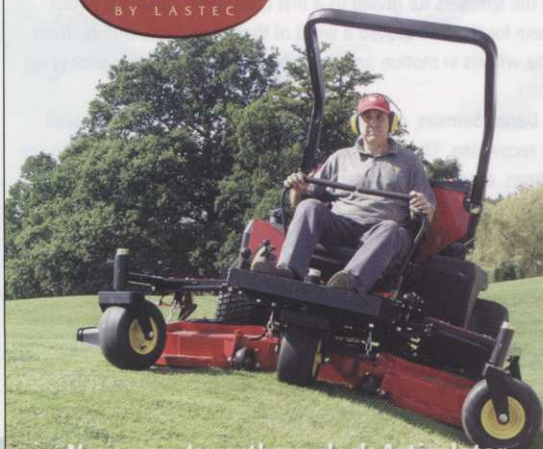
On behalf of the Committee, may I wish all Section members a happy and contented festive season and a successful New Year. Once we get through the turkey and brandy pudding Harrogate Week, including the BTME & ClubHouse Exhibitions, will soon be upon us. In my opinion this is an excellent Show at a good time of the year, so let's support it please. Anyone wishing to get a lift down on the Turfcare

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If Pembo's nephews are still in the 'mix' on The X Factor when you read this news please keep voting for the two lads who perform as Journey South - support the North-East! All the best.

Terry Charlton

Sheffield

On October 24 we held our seminar at Rotherham Golf Club, once again we would like to thank Rotherham Golf Club for giving us the use of their facilities. There was an excellent attendance from greenkeepers with 50 attending, plus guests and sponsors, so it was a good turnout overall.

The first speaker of the day was John Holt, Green Chairman of Clitheroe GC, who gave an interesting lecture on course presentation, which I think gave us some interesting points. Our thanks go to John for giving an excellent lecture. Our second lecture was given by Martyn Jones, from the National Turf Foundation. Martyn gave a very interesting speech on the perception of greenkeeping throughout the world. There was some amazing points made in this lecture. Our thanks go to Martyn for giving everyone something to ponder. We then broke for our lunch, which we would like to thank Rotherham catering staff for providing an excellent buffet that was enjoyed by all.

Our third speaker of the day was Jonathan Gaunt, from Gaunt & Marnoch, Course Architects. Jonathan gave us a very interesting lecture on the creation of a new course design at Silkstone Golf Club incorporating new holes while still keeping some of the existing course. Our thanks go to Jonathan for giving us this very interesting lecture. The final lecture of the day was given by John Stirling, Past Captain of the PGA. It was a very interesting and very humorous speech on his experience of being involved within the game of golf all over the world. Our thanks go to John for a fantastic speech.

Once again I would like to thank all the lecturers for their presentations, which I am sure were enjoyed by everyone present. I would also like to thank all the sponsors for the day that helped make it a success. They were Rigby Taylor, Yorkshire Turf Machinery, Gem, Campey Turf Care, Hunter Grinders, Mansfield Sand, Jenko UK Ltd, Farmura and Aitkins.

After the lecture our Chairman presented our President with a cheque for £500 to give to charity. A few days later Neil presented Rachael Thorpe, from Weston Park Hospital, with the cheque to go towards their million pound Rose Appeal Charity. This charity appeal will open a day and stay ward for chemotherapy patients, which will totally refurbish an unused ward in the hospital with the money from the appeal.

Congratulations go to Paul Neve, from Brough Golf Club, who got married recently to Fiona Jewitt at All Saints Church, South Cave, followed by reception at Cave Castle Hotel. All the best and I hope you both have a very happy life together. Hope to see you soon Paul. Congratulations go to Dave Chappell on becoming a granddad. His daughter, Jenny, gave birth to a lovely daughter named Imogen recently. All the best to you all. I would also like to wish Mark Kelsall a speedy recovery after a recent operation. All the best Mark.

Finally I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and we hope to see you all at our events next year. As usual any news you all know where I am, either 07793111845 or jv.lax@tesco.net.

John Lax

North Wales

Ian Farrell, Deputy Course Manager at Caldly GC on the Wirral, was on his way out mowing on the 6th and 7th fairways when out of the sea mist came a space ship with a very loud turbine jet engine. It continued towards Ian and decided to land itself on the 7th fairway, was it the men from the moon or lilo & stitch or Mr Glazier on the back route to Man Utd?

No, it was just some guy in his Bell Augusta Helicopter who got a little lost in the poor light and thought he would just drop down and ask for directions with his map. Ian kindly pointed him across the Dee estuary where he was headed for Caernarfon to fuel up, so off he went on his merry way, Ian got back on the mower and continued with his cutting. All in a day's work on the Caldly links.

As this magazine drops through your door our Christmas golf tournament on December 7 may well be underway, hopefully we will see many of you there and attending the AGM. We are always in need of committee members/volunteers to



Jane Jones
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carry the Section forward though next year. So if you can afford an hour or so of your time about five times a year and you would like to get involved just get in touch and we will advise you of the rest.

Next year is our Spring Seminar to be held once again at Carden Park, the date will be February 24 and all details will be in the January Issue of Greenkeeper International. The main topic is Woodland and Environmental Management within the golf course. We will be having speakers from around the country along with those passing on their own experiences of how they manage the trees, etc and guest speakers from the PGA on rules and the preparation of a course to PGA specification for Tournament play.

As Harrogate Week, including the BTME & ClubHouse Exhibitions, fast approaches the Section is interested to know if there are any of you who wish to go up by coach, as last year we had a total of 47 people and the coach was full. So please contact Jez on 07876 776 265 at your earliest convenience.

The Section has run a Patrons' scheme for any companies wishing to donate funds to promote not only themselves, but also education and training for greenkeepers and help with prizes for golf days, and sponsor junior greenkeepers, etc. I would like to thank the following companies for commitment to North Wales and for their continued support. Amenity Technology, Acorn Golf (UK), Rigby Taylor, Alpha Amenity, David Williams, GEM Professional, ALS, LT Print, Carden Park & BMS Europe Ltd.

Golf Days in 2006 have been pencilled in as Oswestry, Nefyn & District and Royal St David's. The team match will hopefully be at Sutton Hall GC, confirmation of venues and dates will be out shortly.

Well as another year draws to a close and we all look forward to a well earned Christmas break, it just leaves me to wish you and yours all the best and hope Santa brings you all you wish for down the chimney.

Mesen Cymru

Andrew Acorn - andrew@acorn-golf.co.uk

MIDLAND REGION

East Midland

This year's Rigby Taylor sponsored golf match against the Midlands Section was hosted at the delightful course of Stratford on Avon GC on October 20. The game was played in lovely autumn sunshine in perfect conditions on a well manicured course.

After the morning fourball the Section were trailing by the massive margin of 4 1/2 points to 1/2 point with only Chris Brown & Maurice Hume gaining any success for the Section. After refreshments of soup and sandwiches came the afternoon singles, with a strong team talk of must do better, which we did. The afternoon matches were tied at five games all, with our successes coming from Stuart Raybould, Danny Branson, Gavin Robson, Craig Watt and myself. This unfortunately was not good enough after our morning disaster. The rest of the team included Russell Allen, Frank Kempster and Nigel White.

The course was presented in excellent condition by Howard Middlebrook and his staff. Also thanks should go to the catering staff and, of course, our very generous sponsors Rigby Taylor.

On November 2 our Section travelled North of the Region to Norwood Park GC for our AGM, which also consists of a three ball Texas scramble golf match. 10 teams commenced battle against the weather conditions, which turned difficult towards the end of the day. Several good scores were posted, with the eventual winners as follows.

1. Nigel Colley, Birstall, Antony Bindley, Kirby Muxloe, Tim Allard, Charnwood Forest, 66 4.4 61.6; 2. Adie Porter, Greetham Valley, Mark Carter, Norwood Park, Asa English, (Charnwood Forest, 66-4.0 62); 3. Mark Chamberlain, Tacit, David Smith, Mansfield Sand, Craig Watt, Glen Gorse, 68 4.4 63.6.

Our thanks should go to everybody at Norwood Park for their generous hospitality, especially the course owner, Henry Starkey. The course was set up in excellent condition by the green staff, in very difficult conditions due to all the rain. Our many thanks should go to Vitax who sponsored the day.

Onto the serious business of the AGM. The following were elected into office. Chairman, Frank Kepster; Vice Chairman, Tim Allard; Secretary/Treasurer, Richard Barker; Committee Members, Andy Marsh, Craig Watt, Nigel White and Dan Rodgers.

Antony Bindley

Midland

Our Autumn Tournament was held at Shirley GC. The weather was as excellent as the course, as produced by A. Smith and his very fine team. Yet again we were blessed to play such a wonderful venue. Our greatest of thanks go to Shirley GC and, of course, their very fine greenkeeping team.

The results of the day were: Best Gross. M. Hughes. Nett. 1. M. Hughes; 2. D. Croton; 3. G. Cunningham. Nearest the Pin. M. Hughes. Longest Drive: P. Woodham. Our greatest of thanks go to our old friend John Hammond, Bathgate, for so kindly sponsoring the main prize table.

For many years now we have as a Section enjoyed playing the East Midland Section in an annual golf match. This year's match was held at Stratford GC to which was unsurprisingly in great condition as produced by Howard Middlebrook and his superb team. I have the great pleasure of reporting that our Section was victorious to the tune of 9.5 - 5.5. Our thanks to Tony Cheese, Rigby Taylor, and his counterpart for sponsoring this greatly contested event. I look forward to playing you next year Gavin.

As you may be aware, over the last few months Paul Woodham has been organising and indeed running training courses at Gay Hill GC. These have proven to be very successful, indeed some courses have been over subscribed. Paul has been asked by our Committee if he would take the roll of Training Coordinator for the Section. I am pleased to say that he has accepted such. I shall be informing you of future training opportunities via these lines as and when. Should you have any thoughts regarding future course types please contact Paul on 07880 734 197.

For sometime now it has been suggested that we run a five aside football event. This will take some organising, but if we can put a few teams together I think such could be good fun. To add further interest I hope the trade can present a team. Those interested, please call me on my new mobile phone number, 07908 421 015. You can also use this number to inform me of any news. That'll be the day!

And finally, it is with a tear in my eye that I must report that my old drinking partner, Craig Beet, has gone and got engaged to Simone. His lovely fiancée is an accountant. However I think Simone's work shall be cut out organising his finances, particularly after eight Stella's and the undying need for curry followed by duvet Nan kebab. Congratulations mate.

Just time to wish all a very Merry Christmas.

Sean McDade

East of England

Sorry for the lack of report in November's issue, very little news about. There's a wee bit more this month. I will start with Greenkeepers v Secretaries at Woodhall Spa, with the Greenkeepers resplendent in their squad colours.

A resounding win to the Greenkeepers was sealed by the greatest escape you have ever seen by Mr Firman and myself. 5 down after 7, then 5 down with 6 to play, an eagle 2 on the 17th to half the match (courtesy of yours truly), then a simple par to finish them off. What a match! Sorry to blow my own trumpet, but it's not often my name is mentioned in despatches.

Our sincere thanks go to P. Wisbey and the Committee of Woodhall Spa for allowing us the courtesy of the course - though they could have provided some grappling hooks for bunker exiting. See the picture of our winning moment in the News Section of the magazine.

The Section was admirably represented in the Combined Services v BIGGA match. R. Welford, I. Mawer, D. Coupland and G. Macdonald, the old war horse himself, all played a major part in a solid hammering. Considering last year's result, quite a feat. Well done lads.

The AGM was held at Newark Golf Club with a bit of a cabinet reshuffle. Adi and Les stepped down with A. Walker and R. Welford picking up the mantle as Chairman and Secretary respectively. A big thank you must go to both these lads for the sterling work they have done during their time in office.

A hard act to follow, but they're still on Committee, so I'm sure myself and Rob

will be picking their brains - well Adi's anyway - sorry Les only joking, cheers for all your help and advice. Steve Beverley has also joined us on the Committee.

The format of the golf for the day prior to the AGM was Texas scramble, with a draw for partners. The winning team consisted of Bruce, Dave, Russ and Peter Larter, who won by a short mile.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to thank Jeff Anguige and all the Toro lads for looking after us so well in Spain. It was a fantastic trip and thoroughly beneficial to both sides. Should they need the benefit of my experience again, particularly for Minneapolis, I'm only a phone call away. On a more serious note, if anybody gets the chance to go on one of these fact-finding trips grasp it with both hands - you will not be disappointed. It's not all drink and Puerto Binus. The scenery was quite good as well. Wasn't it Simon?

Allan Walker

BB&O

November, November, remember the fifth of November. Not for the bonfires or fireworks, sky rockets or loud bangs at midnight, nor for oil burners on the go and heaters on full blast, but for the Spanish weather, with mild conditions and sunny days with temperatures soaring through the record books, short sleeves and the occasional golfer spotted dancing down the fairways with short trousers and taking a large slice of carpet every 100 yards. Not always a pleasing sight to the divot repair team.

Anyway, the Rigby Taylor Pairs Final will be played between Matt and Michael from Goring & Streatley and Section Chairman, Sid Arrowsmith and Barry Holt. Congratulations on making it to the final of this most enjoyable competition.

Vince Riches, known as Bob the Builder for the Ely Company, is leaving the Section and making a fresh start in Southern Ireland, where his building skills will come in handy as he hopes to build his own house. Vince has served on the Committee for the past year and will be stepping down as Handicap Secretary. Vince has put in a sterling effort in arranging the scorecards on the golf days and keeping and monitoring the handicaps for the Section. We wish you and your family good luck and the very best in Ireland.

Congratulations to Jim at Lambourne GC who has joined the first time dad club and is the proud father of Henry Kevin, who weighed in at 7lb. Dartmouth Tiger, Craig Earnshaw, has moved to Oak Park GC and is looking forward to his new challenging role as he replaces Mathew Weatherstone, who takes Craig's place as Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Lambourne GC.

This year's Annual General Meeting and Turkey Trot is to be held at The Berkshire GC on December 13 and kicks off with a shotgun start at 9.30am. So, if you have not sent in your entry form you must be quick as numbers are limited to 72. Any members not playing golf on the day, but who wish to share their views at the AGM, can contact John Scoones on 07880 550 380 for full details and proposed agenda.

Finally, from all the serving BB&O Committee and your Chairman, Sid Arrowsmith, have a great December and fantastic Christmas.

Mark Day

Mid Anglia

October 6 saw 22 entrants into the autumn event held at Heydon Grange. The weather was kind and a good day was had by all. At this point I usually say how great the course was, but seeing as we were playing at my track I'll just thank my staff for their hard work in making the day a success.

So if you bear with me, well done Alex Porter for your work on the day and thanks to John Porter for your work leading up to the event, John was in hospital on the day. Thanks also to all the staff at Heydon who catered to everyone's needs and to Seoul Nassau who sponsored the day.

The results were as follows: 1. K. Armstrong, JOG; 2. S. Mason, Stocks; 3. C. Slimm, JOG. Trade & Nearest the Pin. S. Crossdale. Longest Drive. P. Sheather.

After the event it was time for the enthralling AGM, which everyone took part in with gusto! The voting of the Committee took place and resulted in the following.

Chairman, Frank Scullion; Vice Chairman, John Gubb; Sec/Treasurer, Gerald Bruce; Match Sec, Richard Saunders; Committee Members, Bob Butfoy, Colin Robinson and Steve Mason.

A note of special thanks should go out to Steve Mason, who had come to the end

of his sentence, sorry time, as our Chairman. He did a splendid job and the Section thanks him wholeheartedly!

During hours of debating it was discussed that we may be able to attract more members to events if a postal reminder was sent. After medics attended to the Treasurer, it was agreed that it just might be possible if each mail shot was sponsored. So keep an eye on your mailbox next year for event reminders.

Well, that's about all for this year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone. Let's all pay the credit card bills next year, hoo-ray!

Bob Butfoy

SOUTH EAST

Surrey

Some members, like me, when reading the November edition of this magazine, went searching through the Around the Green section in anticipation of my usual entertaining and factual report. My ramblings had been mislaid at Aldwark, but never fear, as this month you get my usual helping.

Many of our members have been very busy earlier in the year and the result of this endeavour has brought forth a host of fledgling greenkeepers. Indeed if a cold snap in winter is relevant, Hindbead GC appears to have been particularly chilly, for both Steve and Adie's wives have given birth recently. Tracy Locke is the proud mother of Alfie Finley, 9lbs, born on September 9 and Kerry Holmes followed up a month later with Thomas, 8lbs 9ozs, on October 16. David Victor is the proud son of his mum and dad, Adrienne and Daniel, on August 21 and weighed in at 8lbs 19ozs. David's dad is a greenkeeper at Woodcote Park, the venue for our Turkey Trot.

Murray Long, the new Course Manager at Sunningdale GC, phoned the hospital when his wife started having contractions and was then greatly surprised when his son, Charlie, 7lbs 1oz, arrived on the living room floor a few minutes later. Congratulations to Penny Long and all our Surrey wives.

Brian Willmott

Kent

Welcome to winter! Although it's not the arctic conditions the tea-leaf and seaweed forecasters lead us to believe, it's still a massive change from the weather I got used to in Chicago recently! I think I told everyone! Now I'm suffering from flu as a result. Oh well, it was worth it.

Big thanks to a couple of guys who I had great fun with during that week, Paul Gould, of Thetford Golf Club, and Pete Obi-Wan Knight, who suffered the indignity of "crossing to the dark side" on more than one occasion. Thanks also to all at John Deere for being such genial hosts.

Back to reality now though as the flu may prove to be the very least of my problems after what I've been told to expect at next week's Sussex versus Kent football match at Brighton's Withdean Stadium. Rumour has it that the Sussex boys are worried and have roped in several ringers to their team who have little, if anything, to do with greenkeeping and more to do with kicking people up in the air! Results to follow next month, if not check the obituary column in the Telegraph.

Best wishes to Kev Morris, our Team Captain, who recently suffered a bad back injury - anything to get out of playing eh! Also to his daughter, who was seriously ill but, thankfully, is recovering.

Your Committee has been busy planning a full fixture list of events for 2006. The programme of free winter seminars at Hadlow College is now in full swing and well worth a visit. There is one seminar a month with a number of top speakers. If you haven't got details already, go to the website address below for more details and directions.

Team golf and football events shall continue at venues all around the South East Region with anyone brave enough to take us on as well as the usual golf days spread right around the county where, as we always say, everybody is welcome.

We shall mail shot a fixture list as soon as possible, but the quickest way to access news, events, results, etc is by logging on to kentgreenkeepers.co.uk. While you're there please use the message board to chat with your fellow professionals

around the county or indeed, to tell us what we should be doing differently for you. The website is constantly improving and being updated as often as we receive news, so it's well worth a look.

Finally, on behalf of all on your Kent Section Committee, a very Happy Christmas to you and yours and sincere best wishes for a fantastic 2006.

Rob Holland

East Anglia

The Section 'Comp' at Gt Yarmouth & Caister started iffy, improved in the middle and ended iffy! I'm talking about the weather not my golf, although come to think of it perhaps that's not a bad description after all. The day was aptly sponsored by Tomlinson Ground Care and the prizes were presented by Robert Tomlinson in the absence of the Club Captain.

The receivers of the prizes were: 0-9 Section. 1. Mike Virley, 39pts; 2. Robert Whiting, 37pts; 3. Rob Boyce, 35 pts. 10-18 Section. 1. Gavin Fox, 35pts; 2. Neil Walker, 35pts; 3. Ian Willitt, 31pts. 19-28 Section. 1. Robert Ransome, 41pts; 2. Richard Mitchell, 36pts; 3. David Driver, 34pts. G&T. 1. Mark Clements, 36pts; 2. Steve Crosdale, 35pts; 3. Ray Forman, 34pts. The Longest Drive won by Mark Henderson. Nearest the Pin won by Steve Davidson. The loo seat went to Alan Mitch, who spilled beer over Stuart Patterson, what a waste.

The course was very well presented, thanks to David Holmes - Elementary. Our thanks to our trade friends: Aitkins; Bartram Mowers; Ben Burgess; Collier Turf Care; Consultant Clarkson; ETT; Headland Turf; Rigby Taylor; Sisis; Symbio; Tacit; Textron and Tomlinson Ground Care. Thanks also to Gt Yarmouth & Caister Golf Club for a great day.

Mick Lathrope

**SOUTH WEST
& SOUTH WALES**

South West

£13.50, that doesn't sound so much to me. Three or four pints down the local. A couple of gallons of petrol. A month's subscription to SKY, or a day out at a quality course like the Players Club, bacon rolls & coffee before a free driving range, 18 holes, followed by a three course meal.

So why were there only twenty something members at the AGM back in October? Your Committee really would like to know the answer to that one. Spare a thought for Nobby Knight, 250 odd invites in the post - less than 30 replies. Can't we support him any better than that?

We had a great day out. Nick Perkins had this challenging golf course in sublime condition. Yours truly started with yet another confidence sapping low hook, but after a penalty-drop out of the gorse and a brilliant approach, almost salvaged a par. The fescue greens were at their best, smooth, true, and very reasonable pace, the water hazards were at their most inviting.

If there'd been a prize for the most golf balls lost in a round, my partner could well have been it. Unfortunately he'd completely run out after nine holes, and then started on mine.

Results were: 1. Tim Needham, Chipping Sodbury, 37pts; 2. Nobby Knight, Marlborough, 36pts; 3. Paul Godwin, Kendleshire, 36pts. Nearest the Pin on the 13th. Andy Parker, Cumberwell Park, 13 inches. Nearest the car park on the same hole. Paul Worcester. Most determined persistent (worst) player. Mike Harris, TH White, 3pts. Many thanks to the Players Club for hosting the day and making us so welcome into their busy club.

At the AGM, Nobby Knight signalled his intention to stand down as Secretary after this coming year. We will be looking for someone in plenty of time to take his place, so please could anyone remotely interested get in touch with Chris Sealey, so that full on-the-job training can be offered. John Keenaghan stood down as Team Captain and was replaced by Adrian Bennett. Marc Haring came on to the Committee as Education Officer in place of Guy Woods, who stepped down with the grateful thanks of the Committee.

Several ideas were put forward from the members present to overhaul and improve fixtures, such as introducing an eclectic or aggregate prize for the year

based on performance and attendance - this and other ideas will be debated and implemented where appropriate by your Committee.

Not all the dates for next year's fixtures are confirmed but will include North Wilts, Chipping Sodbury, The Kendleshire, Minchinhampton, Shirehampton Park, Ogbourne Downs and Bath Golf Club. Another race night is also on the list following this year's success. As soon as the dates are confirmed, an official list will be dropping onto doormats.

Don't forget your chance to win the expenses paid trip to Harrogate Week 2006. Just drop a letter in the post to Nobby Knight, 17, St Marys Gardens, Hilperton March, Trowbridge, Wilts BA14 7PG telling us why you're the most deserving guy for the trip, and follow in the footsteps of Samantha Kennedy (2004) and Wayne Vincent (2005). Thanks to all our Patronage Partners for the sponsorship.

At Cotswold Hills, Wayne and the team are well into rebuilding the second green and improving the bunkers. At Minchinhampton, Kevin Green and his company Greenscapes Imaginative Design, are busily rebuilding four sets of greenside bunkers on the Avening Course. Matt Maryon is assisting and an awesome job is being carried out. Unfortunately 112mm of rain in the 10 days they've been working has been "a little bit of a challenge", but it just goes to show that you can't beat having the right tool for the job.

Kevin has utilised a 15 tonne slew with a swivel/tilt bucket, the bucket part alone costs 10 grand. This machine can reach into every little corner at every conceivable angle without having to move too often - it really does have to be seen to be believed. So much better than the three-tonner from the local hire centre that most of us opt for.

Look forward to seeing lots of you at Lansdown for the Christmas tournament - Jon Jarvis is really looking forward to showing the course and improvements off. The caterers are pulling out all the stops for Christmas Dinner and the raffle will be well supplied as usual. So please support Jon and the Section.

Finally, there's no escape from the pressures of work. I dropped into the local for a well earned couple of pints the other night. No sooner had I got through the door than someone bellowed "Oi. I want a word with you". It turned out to be Bob the barman. Not much of a golfer Bob the barman - loads of enthusiasm but precious little skill.

"I was playing your Common Course the other day," he screamed across the bar at full volume. "Your blokes were there shovelling off cow muck - every hole, there they were, putting me right off, until the 9th where I got in that nasty deep quarry at the side of the green. I had about four shots and still hadn't got out, and one of your guys handed me this grotty old shovel - black it was and dripping with cow dung and said 'Ere, have a go with this' They all fell about laughing and I couldn't hit a thing after that."

Keep the info coming in, have a great Christmas and New Year, and lets see some better-attended meetings in 2006.

Paul Worster. Tel: 01453 837355; Mobile: 07768 394593.

South Coast

I have some very sad news to pass onto you first in this month's news. Chris Parsons, Assistant Greenkeeper at Barton-on-sea Golf Club, passed away suddenly while on holiday, aged just 45. Although Chris had been unwell for some time his passing came as a great shock to everybody.

I was fortunate to go to college with Chris, so knew him well. He was a modest man, hard working and one who took a great pride in everything that he did. He was respected by all who knew him and will be sadly missed by all in the Section that had the privilege to know him.

Although he didn't attend our golf days Chris was always at our seminar and enjoyed them enormously. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Chris' family and friends at this very difficult time.

I failed to report on our Section AGM last month but can report it went very smoothly and was over in record time. I would like to think that the reason it ran so quickly was because the Committee continue to do a tremendous job on behalf of the Section and we have had another very successful year.

However the sceptic in me leads me to believe apathy reigns among us and this, at times, shows itself throughout the Section. It's easy to bury our heads, do nothing and make no time for attending Section, Regional and National events. But our Association is just like life, the more you put in, the more you get back.

I can't think of a time when we're not busy now, our golf courses and members are all demanding, so it's a question of making time and making a difference. Our Association depends on support from all of the membership, which includes you.

If you're one of the members who rarely attends Section, Regional or National events and only reads the back pages in our magazine, then turn over a new leaf in 2006 and help make the difference. You can make that difference by attending Harrogate Week, including the BTME & ClubHouse Exhibitions - January 22-27. Details have been sent out to you and there are a number of packages to suit all pockets. So let's see some new faces at Harrogate Week 2006.

It seems somewhat strange writing these Section notes, talking about 2006 with six weeks to go to Christmas. I would like this opportunity to thank all our sponsors for their outstanding generosity again this year, without them we just wouldn't be so successful and our golf days just wouldn't be half as good.

I would also like to pass on the Section's thanks to our president, Jim Fry, for another generous donation to Section funds. Also I would like to pass on our best wishes to him, particularly as he is unwell at the moment.

Many thanks also to all the staff at HQ that have helped me and our Section over the last year. We tend to forget the staff at HQ, who work so hard on our behalf; they really do make my job so much easier.

Finally to you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope the festive season is a good one for you all.

Alex McCombie

Devon & Cornwall

I can't believe that our Section meetings have commenced again; where has the time gone? In the Devon & Cornwall Section our meetings commence in October and continue through to March, with a mid-summer meeting in June.

Mullion Golf Club was the venue for our first meeting in the depth of Cornwall, not far from the Lizard, which meant a long drive for some of our members. Ray Day, the Head Greenkeeper from Saunton, had a three hour drive, lads from Torquay and Dainton Park Golf Clubs a two and a half hour journey. That's what I call dedication to BIGGA and our Section.

The golf match was for the D. O. Hunt and Roffey Ltd Trophy, a Stableford format, the winners were as follows: 1. Tim Ellis, Mullion Golf Club, 37 pts - must be local knowledge; 2. Simon Coombes, Dainton Park Golf Club, 36pts; 3. Stephen Green, Torquay Golf Club, 34pts.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gordon Tamlyn, the Head Greenkeeper at Mullion, for all his hard work with his staff for presenting the course in such excellent condition. When I drove down to Mullion on the day before the rain was horrendous, so much so that I was beginning to think that the course would be unplayable, not to mention the very thick fog - not so. Gordon, with a lot of hard work, made sure the course was in tip top condition, that was until the non golfers went on the course walk and the heavens opened again. Never mind, the catering staff produced an excellent meal all washed down with a drop of the amber liquor and everyone was more than contented.

Congratulations must go to Steve Evans, Head Greenkeeper at Yelverton, and his lovely wife, Lyn, who have just celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. Also congratulations to their eldest daughter, Tracey, who was recently married to Anthony Newland, the First Assistant at Tavistock Golf Club, and guess what, rumours have it that there is a little greenkeeper on its way.

Now I am sure you have all heard of Richard Whyman, well your Vice Chairman has also just celebrated with Denise their silver wedding anniversary. Many congratulations to you all.

Quite recently we have suffered some terrible gales in the South West, not to mention the floods, now I am beginning to put two and two together. Steve spent a week in Weymouth with Lyn in his caravan, and the weather changed dramatically, when it was perfect the week before, and Richard and Denise celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in Mexico and we all know what happened when they returned, makes you think.

I have also been asked to inform all the members in our Section that a certain greenkeeper by the name of Keith Kellow, from Falmouth Golf Club, is about to celebrate his 50 birthday, my word how news travels.

On Thursday November 3 I arranged a Soil Science Workshop at Padbrook Park Golf Club and Hotel. The day was a great success with nearly 70 delegates

attending. My thanks go to Roger Davey, of Irritech Limited, for their Sponsorship, assisted by PSD Agronomy's Jay Dodson and Andy Cole.

The facilities at Padbrook Park were such that we were able to hold four different lectures in the same room all at the same time. Unfortunately the weather was very wet which prevented us all from going on the course which was the original intention for one of the workshops mainly for Roger to demonstrate the GPS System. I suppose we can't expect weather to suit our demands in November.

I look forward to seeing you all at our Christmas Party in December at Okehampton Golf Club
Donovan O Hunt.
Events Co-ordinator

South Wales

Our AGM took place at Raglan Park GC, a respectable 35 attending. A big thank you to the club for allowing us to host our Autumn Tournament and AGM there, if you ever get a chance to play this lovely scenic course take it up. Thanks to the General Manager, Haydn Wood, for making us feel welcome and for preparing the course, great condition and we would like to thank him for making the whole day go smoothly.

We were honoured to have our Chief Executive, John Pemberton, to our Autumn Competition and AGM. I know he is a busy man, especially at this time of year as I am sure most AGMs around the country are taking place. He gave us all an interesting insight to the goings on at HQ. It was also lovely to see our Regional Representative, Jane Jones. I had the pleasure of playing golf with her that day.

Russell Anderson has taken over the Chairman's role from me. I would like to wish him all the best for the next two years. It was a tremendous honour and a privilege to represent the South Wales Section as Chairman. I met some wonderful people and made some life long friends. To be honest I was not looking forward to taking up the roll, when then Chairman, Julian Bartlett Jones, asked me to be his Vice, almost four years ago. But I accepted it and I loved every minute of it and will cherish the memories. To be truthful, I was quite reluctant to hand over, but I am handing over to a worthy Chairman. Our Section is in good hands.

A huge thank you to Peter Lacey, our Section Secretary. I don't know when his long suffering wife, Debbie, gets to spend any time with him, as he seems to be always on duty for the Section. We are indebted to him and it was a pleasure working with him.

Committee standing for 2006: Chairman, Russell Anderson; Vice Chairman, Kerry Jones; President, Henry Stead; Vice President, David Ward; Secretary, Peter Lacey; Committee, Angus Macleod, Adrian Panks, Julian Bartlett Jones, Peter Holmstrom, David Ward and Andy Roach, Match Captain; Regional Board Representatives, Julian Bartlett Jones, Angus Macleod and Peter Lacey (reserve).

Around 36 played golf, congratulations to the winners, high scoring, where's Andy Roach (match captain) when you need him? Big thank you to the sponsors, Keith Morgan Mowers, for their continued support and prize table, represented by James Morgan and Ray Harris.

Winner of the Keith Morgan Trophy. Daryl Jones, 40pts. Runner up. Colin Thomas, 39pts. 3. Richard Patterson, 39pts. Longest Drive. Lyndon Brown, with a monster drive. Nearest the Pin. David Gladwin, got lucky. Trade Prize. Adrian Masters, last seen knocking out BIGGA ties at a car boot sale - he has made a clean sweep of ties at all our fixtures so far this year.

The Rigby Taylor Final was played over a rather windy Tenby GC. The Chairman reported back saying the course was in excellent condition. Thanks to Course Manager, Chris Jenkins, for his

preparation work and to Tenby GC for allowing us to host our Blue Ribbon event there.

Congratulations to both finalists, although there has to be a winner and Daryl Jones and Leyton Seymour beat Adrian Panks and Gary Humphries. Big thanks to Rigby Taylor for their continued sponsorship and in particularly Dave Carvey and Roy Barker for their help organising and for looking after the finalists.

The 53rd Annual Dinner of the Wales branch of the IOG was held on Friday October 7 at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. Almost 30 Greenkeepers and partners attended. A great night was had by all and we are hoping to make this an annual get together.

The Winter Evening Lecture Series 2006 has been finalised and is as follows. January 11 - Alex Edwards, Inturf, 'From start to finish the production of custom grown turf from soil preparation through to delivery'. February 8, Martin Ward, Symbio, 'Composted Tea - a novel approach to brewing your own'. March 8, Chris Briggs, Avoncrop, 'An update on amenity pesticides and relevant legislation'. April 12, Celtic Manor Resort, Maintenance Facility visit - A tour of this state of the art maintenance complex by Course Manager Jim McKenzie. April 27, Annual Spring Seminar, Royal Porthcawl Golf Club, sponsored by Headland Amenity Products. All these nights are free.
Angus Macleod

SECTION NOTES INFORMATION

In order to improve the sending and receiving of Section Notes, where possible can all future notes be emailed to gareth@bigga.co.uk by no later than the 5th of the month prior to publication please.
Word limited for Section notes: 500-600.

You will receive an email back to confirm receipt of your notes.
If you do not receive this confirmation please get in touch with BIGGA.

In the Shed ANSWERS

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A QUICK NINE HOLES

1. Annika Sorenstam in the Mizuno Classic
2. One in 10, according to a survey for Thomson Holidays
3. Togo
4. Jamie Oliver
5. Hammer
6. Sun Editor Rebekah Wade
7. Wasps
8. Yusuf Islam - formerly known as Cat Stevens
9. Houston Astros

ANAGRAM

- ENGLISH TINT - Silent Night
CLAMS THIS STAR - Last Christmas

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



SUDOKU

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