



News from the Chief Executive

Plans for BTME & ClubHouse progress with the event approaching at an alarming rate. It seems no time at all since it was April and we were planning the education programme and discussing our marketing strategy with the steering committee.

In June we agreed to host the annual International Summit on Friday January 21 and delegate response to this has been excellent. Demand for space is encouraging, with several exhibitors coming to the show for the first time and others looking to expand their space. Bookings for the extended workshop and seminar packages on offer exceed numbers at the corresponding time last year and the Association feels that it is heading in the right direction.

The event, which provides a vital source of income for the Association, continues to grow as we dedicate more resources and invest more and more time and money in it, in an attempt to secure its future well being.

The management team at Aldwark is conscious that the exhibition is not just about making money for BIGGA or providing subsidised education for its members. It has to work as a showcase for the industry where traditional golf course equipment, machinery and maintenance products can be successfully marketed alongside innovative products to an increasingly discerning buyer.

A buyer who is expected to produce a higher and higher standard of facility while at the same time seeing his or her budget being constantly put under pressure. Latterly the rumblings on the horizon by some of the trade regarding the cost of supporting principally two shows, Saltex and our own, has become a black cloud over the future of both these events. Many of the major machinery manufacturers have indicated they can no longer justify exhibiting at both shows on an annual basis.

Clearly this is cause for concern and we must work with the exhibitors to try to resolve the financial pressures that they are also suffering. The Sales and Marketing staff at these companies are not exempt from the same budgetary restrictions that many Course Managers, Golf Club Secretaries and Chairmen of Green experience.

How we will resolve the matter remains to be seen. Many exhibitors are adamant that they would support an annual show at Harrogate but the logistics of a compromise are difficult to work out. I am sure it will be the subject of much discussion at Harrogate and for some time into 2005. There is one major factor in the whole equation that must not be overlooked and that is the visitor.

All too often we see the same faces at Harrogate, these are the dedicated keen members who take a pride in being a part of what has grown to be a key organisation in the world of golf. What do we have to do to get your colleagues along, if only for a day? Perhaps someone might like to respond via the bulletin board or e-mail me, at john@bigga.co.uk, Sensible suggestions only please!

At a time when all involved in the industry are working more closely together than ever before the clock is in danger of being turned back through lack of funding.

In the past the trade have been very supportive of the Association and this must neither be overlooked nor taken for granted and much of BIGGA's progress and development would not have been possible but for their help. I hope that the excellent working relationship that exists between the trade and the Association can result in a solution being found that favours all parties.

On a more positive note, I would like to congratulate Scott MacCallum on winning the 'Writing' category in the recent Communications in Business annual competition for journalists.

Finally, I wish everyone a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible during 2005.

John Pemberton



Peter Boyd
SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440

SCOTTISH REGION

Annual Conference, Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline.

On Tuesday March 1 2005 BIGGA Scottish Region returns once more to the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, for their Annual Conference.

This year the Scottish Region have speakers from all sides of the industry coming to Dunfermline to provide interesting and relevant topics, which should be of interest to everyone in greenkeeping.

From the ranks of the greenkeepers we have Frank Ainsworth, Course Manager, Hilton Templepatrick GC, and Kenny MacKay, Senior Course Manager, Marriott UK. Other speakers include Jay Dobson, PSD Agronomy, Neil Baldwin, Amega Sciences, Douglas Shearer, Head of Greenkeeping & Horticulture, Elmwood College and Louise Hollingworth, from WRAP.

All the speakers have confirmed their attendance and full details and application forms will be available in the early part of January 2005 and will be posted to all members in the Scottish Region.

The Conference Centre at Lauder College is centrally located and has easy access from the motorway.

Peter J. Boyd Regional Administrator

NORTHERN REGION

Northern

I have to start the year on a sad note with the news of the sudden death of Telford Jarvis. Telford was a regular attendee at all Northern Section golf events and will be very much missed by all. At the Golf Day in December the proceeds of the raffle, amounting to £200, were donated to Telford's family on behalf of all at the Northern Section. I have been asked to pass on a thank you message to everyone who donated on behalf of Telford's wife, Lisa, and son, Roman.

There was a fantastic turnout for the Christmas golf day on December 2, at Crow Nest Golf Club. Yet again we had a great day, and for a refreshing change the weather was fine and dry. The format on the day was a Texas Scramble with eight teams comprising of four players taking part. The winners on the day were Mel Guy, Henry Bechelet, Adrian Hollroyd and Steve Heaton (I know, I couldn't believe that Steve won either). The golf was followed by an excellent meal and a few light liquid refreshments. A massive thanks must go to Rob Gee, his staff and everybody at Crow Nest for the superb course, meal and hospitality.

After the golf the 'rabble' was let loose in Halifax which turned out to be yet another fantastic night and I'm pleased to inform you that the night ended in just one arrest, but no names will be mentioned!

With Christmas out of the way (hope Santa brought you all that you asked for) it's time to wish you all the very best for 2005, I hope it's a successful greenkeeping year for you all. Next month I'll bring you the details for the spring tournament, which we are currently arranging.

Don't forget BTME 2005, 18-20 January.

Adam Speight 07739319060 - 01274 638366

North Wales

Happy New Year and a warm welcome to the 2005 season for the North Wales Section. Firstly from Royal St David's GC the Kerry bros would like to thank Andy Campbell MG on their recent visit to Carden Park and for the hospitality shown to them. Secondly an apology to Richard Shields who won the Bromborough Autumn Tournament Best Gross with a reported 80 was in fact a 78.

Which brings me to the results from our Christmas Tournament, held at the Prestatyn Links GC, with its ever so cleverly repaired greens from the spate of direct vandalism earlier this year. They are as follows: Greenkeepers. 1. Craig Wheeler, Frodsham GC, 42 pts; 2. Alan Kelsall, Portal GC, 40pts; 3. Andy Peel, Bull Bay GC, 40pts; 4. Brian Taylor, Sandiway GC, 39pts; and with local knowledge, 5. Dave Parry, Prestatyn GC, 39pts. Guests. 1. Islyn Luke, also Prestatyn GC; 2. Paul Lowe, Rhuddlan GC. Two Nearest the Pin prizes, sponsored by BATgolf, went to Andy Peel, 60 inches on the 6th, and Dave Parry, 52" on the 11th. The trade trophy was Dave Austin, from Rigby Taylor, 41pts and the Aggregate trophy for the year went to Alun Lewis, Llanynymech.

A total of 76 players took part and our thanks go to Dave Parry and his team for presenting the course in top condition, for the time of year, to the caterers and the bar staff, for our turkey meal, and the committee, for the courtesy of the course, also to the patrons of the North Wales Section, for their continued support. Special thanks also to TACIT for buying everyone a bacon butty and finally to Stuart Yarwood, who collected just under £140 from the raffle with his unique approach selling the raffle tickets, "£3 for 3 strips," instead of the usual £1 per strip!

We welcome Carl Crocher, from Caldly GC, on to the committee, Carl, who was associated with his former Section in Kent, will help out with all the issues covering North Wales, and one item we discussed was sorting out a race night out at the Chester racecourse, including a meal for later on this year.

Some dates for your calendar this year are: Jan 18 - 20, BTME Harrogate; Feb 22, Spring combined seminar, at Mere G&CC; April 5, North Wales Vs North West, at Wilmslow GC, give us a call if you would like to play; May 25, Spring Tournament, at Upton by Chester GC; July 14 - 17, Open Championship at St Andrews; July/Aug, will



Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
 Tel: 01476 550115



Clive Osgood
SOUTH EAST
 Tel: 01737 819343



Jane Jones
SOUTH WEST AND WALES
 Tel: 01454 270850

be the Golf Management Trophy, date TBC; October 4 is at Eaton GC, for autumn, and the Christmas is at Rhuddlan GC in December (7th maybe). If you remember last time rain stopped play on the 12th, so it will be nice to go back and finish the course.

Amenity Technology have again sponsored the coach for BTME and your forms for pick up points, etc will be in the post shortly. Also the Amtec 'do' has changed venues this year and will be on the Tuesday night, 18, 5 – 7 pm, in Wetherspoons in the town. If anyone requires details of the coach or of the show please give us a call.

Look forward to seeing you up in Harrogate. Ps. If you are thinking of visiting the GCSAA, Orlando, in February the pound – dollar rate is really good at the moment, and it might never be cheaper to go, than now!

Mesen Cymru Andrew Acorn – acorn@golf@supanet.com

MIDLAND REGION

East Midland

This year's AGM was held at Rushcliffe GC, on Thursday November 11, on a dry bright autumn day. The event was well supported with 13 teams forming a three man Texas Scramble format. The winning score came from Tim Bloodworth, Ian Needham and Frank Kempster, with a Nett score of 58.4. In second place were Phil Reffin, Simon Brown and Stuart Raybould, with a Nett score of 60.3. Nearest the Pin was won by Ian Needham, with Ryun Holden taking the prize for the Longest Drive. Our thanks should go to all at Rushcliffe GC for allowing us courtesy of their course and special thanks should be extended to Kevin James and his staff for a really great golf course. Finally a thank you should be extended to Vitax for sponsoring the prize table.

Onto the Section AGM, the following were voted into office by the members: Chairman - Frank Kempster, Vice Chairman and Secretary - Antony Bindley, Treasurer - Richard Barker, additional members of the management committee, Stuart Raybould, Tim Allard, Kevin Kinzer, Ian Needham, Adi Porter and Gavin Robson.

Also on behalf of the Section I would like to take this opportunity to thank David James and Jamie Bedford, who have now finished their term as committee members, for their sterling support to the Section throughout the last two years.

Antony Bindley

Midland

As I sit here compiling my usual dross, with hands stained, a rather vibrant blue from pricking Sloes so as to convert Poteen into that wonderful Irish liquor Sloe Gin (it makes a change from them being blue from spray indicator). The Sloe Gin flavour of last year's batch reminds me of playing a spring event some years ago at Harborne GC. During the front nine I bumped into the Reverend Trafford, he offered me a sip from his hipflask, which contained the said beverage. Following this all too small but potent refreshment, I found my legs somewhat unwilling. What a character! Our profession has, and still is deliciously full of them. Please let me know about yours?

Our Autumn Tournament was held on October 22 at that exquisite venue known as Hawkstone Park Golf Club. Now imagine moving into a new challenge and finding that your new club is, in two weeks, to host one of the largest BIGGA Section events. This being the first task presented to Paul Hyde, Course Manager, who has obviously very recently moved into our Section from the North West (Mere G&CC). Paul, with the support of the fine established greenkeeping team provided a course that was not only a joy to play, but also the standard presented enhanced one of the most interestingly visual courses we have had the pleasure to play. From us all very well done gentlemen. Also thanks to the catering team for a superb meal. Furthermore, thanks to the Captain, Mr Tony Harrop, for making us so welcome and for his eloquent after dinner speech. Our thanks indeed Mr Captain.

The results of the day were: Best Gross. M. Hughes. Best Nett. 1. A. Dalton; 2. E. Stant; 3. D. Gibbons; 4. M. Hughes; 5. D. Fellows; 6. P. Rainsford. Our thanks to R. Jones, of Oakleys Ground Care, for the main prize table. Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive went to E. Stant and M. Grestly respectively, our thanks to WWB Minerals.

It gives me great pleasure in welcoming five new members this month. Robert Jones, of Enville GC, Neville Tapp, Ben Essam, Robert Coppack and Daniel Rowe, all from The Warwickshire.

Now for the jammy berks, I talk about the finalists of the Scotts Doubles, of which was played at Wentworth on the West Course, "as you do". The finalists being P. Woodham and E. Stant versus T. Cheese and P. Nixon. The victors being Woodham and Stant. However, all must be considered as winners. Our thanks to Wentworth Golf Club and, of course, Chris Kennedy. I hope that Scotts shall continue to organise and support this great competition. What a wonderful opportunity to play one of the best parkland courses within the UK. How can you not enter with such a prize on offer?

To finish, an admission. I have in the past stated that I do not find links courses appealing, and much prefer parkland tracks. How naive of me. We were lucky enough to hold our Christmas Tournament at Hoylake GC. I've never enjoyed playing golf as much, such was also iterated by the rest of the field. Our thanks to Royal Liverpool and, of course, the splendid greenkeeping team, as headed by Mr D. Green. Words fail me gentlemen, but wow and thanks will have to suffice. Derek was unable to join us as he was away in a warmer climate driving steam trains. I guess he resembled a pander on his return.

The results of the day were: 1. D. Fellows and K. Kinzer; 2. A. Corn and S. McDade; 3. Terry Cheese and R. Thomas; 4. P. Nixon and M. Gash; 5. E. Stant and P. Richmond. Our thanks to Mark Chamberlain, of Tacit, for the great prize table, "hic". Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive was won by D. Fellows and R. Thwaites respectively. Our thanks to J. Skelton, of WBB Minerals, for their kind sponsorship.

Wishing us all a very successful and happy New Year.

Sean McDade

BB&O

Once again with the festive season over, Turkey sandwiches still in the lunchbox with the odd mince pie that has survived intact into the New Year, not forgetting the new South Beach Diet and Silk Cut patches to help give up the dreaded weed, with all this we have finished off 2004 with a bang, and look forward to another prosperous and challenging 2005 in the Chinese year of the Rooster.

On October 12, the BBO held a clay pigeon shooting competition at West London Shooting Grounds. The good, the bad and the ugly turned up with guns blazing and filled the West London air with the smell of gun smoke. After a practice session, three shooting disciplines were chosen and the best number of clays broken out of 25 would test the Beretta's and Browning guns to the limit as 34 budding John Wayne's blazed away (some for the first time) under the tuition of qualified instructors.

Jon Beck's burger bar stood up well in the wind and rain as he served up half pounders to quell our appetite. Thanks go to sponsors Rigby Taylor, Sherriff Amenity, Tacit and Gem for the prizes. The top gun of the day was Ray Roberts with a 21 point victory over Steve Gardner in second place with third prize going to Mervin Downing followed by Lee Robinson in fourth place. Gary Bateman, from The Buckinghamshire, picked up a prize for managing to miss most of the clays.

Next it was off to the home of the Tartan Terminator and Japanese Gardens, in Newbury, for our Annual General Meeting and Turkey Trot, at Donnington Grove Golf Club. All 64 of the good, the bad and the ugly turned up to battle it out with a Texas Scramble format, followed by a roast dinner in the exquisite dining rooms of Donnington Grove GC.

Results were as follows: Steve Garne, from Flackwell Heath GC, feathered a middle iron for Nearest the Pin and Mike Johnson, from Henley GC, jammed straightest drive on the 18th. Mike and his team then took first place with a convincing 56.9.

Second place went to Flackwell Heath GC, with 58, and the Tartan Team, from Donnington Grove GC, managing a well deserved third place with 59. A big thank you to Coreen Wilson for co-ordinating this excellent venue and Donnington Grove GC for providing the Section with fantastic facilities and the courtesy of the course. Thanks too to Roscoe and his team for ensuring preparation of the course, which was first class.

Avoncrop were the main sponsors for the day and Gary Ogilvie presented the prizes in the absence of Colin White, we wish Colin a speedy recovery, back to work, back on the road and back at all our golf days. Thank you to all our sponsors throughout the year, we have had great support from the trade, which have included Scotts, Am-Tech, Sherriff, Avoncrop, Tacit, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Turner Groundcare, Ely and Gem Professional.

The Annual General Meeting followed and Sid Arrowsmith was voted on as the new Chairman for the Section, followed by John Scoones (Secretary), Mitch Stewart (Treasurer), Vince Riches (Handicap Secretary) and Peter Smith, Frank Booth, Alistair Higgs and Gareth Acteson as committee members and yours truly as the scribe for another year. Wishing you a fantastic New Year!

Mark Day

Mid Anglia

Greetings readers, here's the latest from the buzzing Mid Anglia Section HQ. December 9 saw 88 of us take on the course at Chesfield Downs for the annual Texas Scramble. A great day was had by everyone and many thanks must go to Course Manager, Ed O'Hanlon, and his team for preparing the course to a high standard and for ordering the weather, as the sun came out.

We all sat down to a sumptuous Christmas dinner, served up by the friendly catering staff, so a big thank you goes out to all at Chesfield Downs for making our day enjoyable. Here is the day's results: 1. G. Knight, B. Cox, M. Towler, D. Martin; 2. J. Bondfield, D. Spencer, A. Copland, D. Mugford; 3. M. Read, J. Moorhouse, J. Farrel, L. Cant. Nearest the Pin. J. Bondfield John Chapman walked away with the Player of the Year Award 2004, as well as a few goodies, so well done Johnny!

Our whole day was gratefully sponsored by Avoncrop and was represented by Barry McCloskey, who did a fine job handing out the prizes. Sadly, Barry had news of a long time friend of the Section, Colin "Chalky" White, who is currently very ill. All of us send our best wishes to Colin and hope for a speedy recovery.

Just a couple more things, Gary Carter has left Letchworth to go to Kolven Golf Club, good luck to him and congrats to Gavin Simkins who gave birth to a new born son (well that's not strictly true, Gavin's wife gave birth and did all the hard work).

That's about it for this month, two things to remember guys (and gals), don't eat yellow snow and, as a great philosopher once said, "He who dares . . . wins! Rodgers!"

Bob Butfoy

SOUTH EAST

Surrey

December 6 and only a handful of frosts. The grass is still growing and those winter jobs in the warm shed that used to come with regularity must wait for the cold spell that Michael Fish, if he hadn't retired, would surely have predicted.

Dave Wyborn is still in his shorts so it must be global warming and by the year 2050 USGA greens will be the norm even in Scotland. "Rubbish," I hear you say and, as I fully agree, I'll get on with my usual report from around Surrey.

Jessica Arnold, wife of Steve, from Redhill & Reigate GC, has broken her ankle and Steve, full of sympathy for his wife and a hatred for washing, ironing and housework, anxiously awaits her early recovery. Another Steve, this one from Silvermere GC, is the proud father of his first child, Kai Cooper, 7lbs. 3ozs. His wife, Rayne, who has experience of looking after her husband, has found that having another baby in the family will be no problem. Congratulations also to David Murdoch MG, of Liphook GC, and his partner, Debbie, who have had a little baby girl, 9lbs. 2ozs. Lauren.

The Cooper family now gets another mention as we congratulate that well known Kingswood greenkeeper, Ken, who was 60 in December. Paul Hobden is welcomed into

Surrey as the new headman at Pyrford and Traditions golf courses.

Les Coombes, from Windlesham GC, would like to pass on a tip to all other clubs that suffer from invasions of Canada Geese. Les, now known as the Lone Ranger, has found that a starting pistol moves them on and also makes members who see him in the distance keep any silly little complaints to themselves.

The AGM and Turkey Trot, played at Laleham GC, was a huge success. John Ross and his greenkeepers had the course in excellent order, he said, and the meal was a culinary delight. The AGM might have produced many topics for discussion that could have kept us there all night, but fortunately this well run Section has all Surrey members 100% behind the committee, not forgetting that a few drinks usually send them to sleep until the prize giving.

Prizes were won by Gavin Kyle, 40 points, Ian Sellers, 39 points, and John Mathis, 38 points. John Mathis also won Longest Drive and Chris Varrow, Nearest the Pin. Sponsors for the day were Tacit and yours truly, after a disastrous round, grudgingly gave away the Moat Chandon.

Ian Sellers, after six years as Secretary, has decided that his reign must come to an end and, as he and his partner are expecting an addition to the family early this year, John Ross was voted on to the committee as his replacement, Ian, very many thanks from the Section for a job very, very well done. It was also confirmed that Derek Cunliffe had previously been seconded onto the committee as handicap Secretary.
Brian Willmott

Kent

The Kent Section has now been officially reformed following an EGM held at Birchwood Park Golf Centre on November 25, 2004. The new committee is: John Millen (Chairman), David Wood (Secretary), Kevin Morris and Rob Holland as Greenkeeper Members and also Neil Pullen and Gary Tait as Representatives from the trade.

It was a lively meeting and really encouraging to hear so many of the 46 attendees offering support and ideas to progress the Section's status. Clive Osgood chaired the opening proceedings in his role of South East Regional Administrator. Clive was also enthused by the high turnout and the determination of many who wish to see our Section successful again.

The EGM followed a Turkey Trot golf tournament at Birchwood Park. Many thanks to my staff who helped prepare the course superbly for the day and to the catering department for a great Christmas dinner. The day was won by Ian Garfield, from Tenterden Golf Club, on 48 points, second was Rob Holland, on 47 points, and third Michael Wigstone, from Tenterden, again on 45 points. Nearest the Pin prize went to Andy Pearson, from the London Club, and Longest Drive to Andrew Wood, of Avoncrop Amenity.

The refreshments on course were kindly provided by Ernest Doe's and evening prizes donated by Scotts, Collier Turf Care and Godfrey's. As well as a raffle, we held an auction for two tickets donated by Doe's for the Charlton versus Chelsea match, which raised £46 for the Kent Air Ambulance Trust.

Everyone who attended the day left Birchwood feeling confident that the Kent Section had found its feet and was heading in the right direction again. We do, however, require input from everyone in the Region to elevate it to its rightful status again. Clive Osgood will be visiting all clubs, in time, trying to drum up support but, in the meantime, please contact me with any news. Wishing you all a successful New Year!
Rob Holland

London

The London Section Turkey Trot has just been played over the tremendous Ashridge Golf Course, which I have been told by a number of people was in excellent condition and even more so for the time of year. Well done to the Course Manager and all his staff. The food that followed was also mentioned in great vein and I believe the carvery style dinner was very popular with everyone that attended.

Winners this year were: 1. Lee and partner, from Old Folde, and Bob, from Moor Park; 2. Chris Turpie, Steve Crossdale and Nick Brown; 3. Dave Badlham, Kevin and Dareen, from Stockley.

I would like to thank everyone that made the effort to turn up and the final count of 46 has made the year (on the golfing front) a very successful one for the London Section. After the meal we held our AGM, which was well attended, with the same committee staying on for another year and really a very quick and smooth meeting with no major issues being discussed.

At this point, I would like to thank everyone who has helped out during the year from Turners, Avoncrop, Phil Jones, Textron, Doe's, Headlands, Tacit and there are more, for whom the London Section could not have survived without and we hope to this continues from them all for years to come.

Also thanks must go to Peter Phillips and David Badham who both spent a lot of time organising venues and sponsors. Christmas will have gone by the time this is read, I hope everyone enjoyed it, all the best to everyone for a great 2005. Happy New Year
Alec Macindoe

Essex

Well it's been a long, long time, so much has happened, so much grass has grown, so much grass has been cut, many scalps, many funny stories, many interesting tales, many pieces of advice to share with other greenkeepers, many relationships made, many doses of disease caught (eh Greg), but I have sat by my mobile phone day in day out and nobody has phoned to give me anything to write about. Apart from two golf days to report about I have one piece of news. Steve Crossdale is now a proud new dad, a baby boy, it weighed 5lb 7oz and the rest of his body was 1lb 2 oz. well done Steve, glad he takes after you, a chip off the old block, or sausage off the old meat counter!

Golf days, there's been a few, or then again too few to mention, sorry been watching too much 'X Factor'. Our summer meeting was at the beautiful Saffron Walden, sponsored by Tuckwells, one of my favourite courses; sadly I was unable to attend. I understand from everyone that Ray and his team produced a superb course for everybody; a great day was had by all, and thank you to Saffron Walden Golf Club for their hospitality. Overall winner was Richard Moss, 39 points (back 9). Section 1. 1.

Greg "Hymer" Knight, 39 points; 2. Ian Cambridge, 39 points. Section 2. 1. Craig Serafin, 36 points; 2. Ray Goodshall, 34 points. Section 3. 1. Sam Cook, 38 points; 2. Jon Rattenbury, 31 points. Thomas - dad stop nagging me I can hit a longer ball than you - Fance won the guest prize with a yee ha 44 points, and Mark Day won the trade prize with 41 points. Thanks for raffle prizes from Banks Amenity, Avon Crop. Seoul Nassau, Ernest Doe's, Vitax, Avoncrop, CMW, Rigby Taylor, Sherriffs, Tacit, Collyer Turf, Uncle Tom Cobbley and all!

The autumn golf day was held at The Busted, sponsored by Mark and Craig, from Collyer Turf, again I was sadly unable to attend. I am the first one to moan about people not supporting golf days so I have given myself a good moaning and beating, which I quite enjoyed. Our thanks go to Phil Aibon, Lee Mence and all the staff at The Busted for providing us with a great course and very welcome and excellent facilities.

The overall winner of the day was Sam Cook. Section 1. 1. Rowland Hughes; 2. Greg Knight; 3. George Grimes. Section 2. 1. Andy Cracknell; 2. Ian Wood; 3. Richard Williams. Guest Prize was won by Geoff Johnson and Trade Prize was won by Robbie Mitchell, of CMW. Longest Drive was won by Dave "that makes a change" Beal and Nearest the Pin was won by Andrew Wood. Thanks for raffle prizes from Scotts, Rigby Taylor, Sherriffs, Tacit, Banks Amenity, Vitax, Tuckwells, CMW, Seoul Nassau, Tuckwells and Avoncrop.

Well that's about it from me this month, I don't like to over do it. I hope you all had a dry and Happy Christmas and a rewarding New Year. Finally please send me something to write about otherwise I will have to start writing about Abridge and how wonderful the staff are there.

Geoff Smith

SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES

We Need Your Ideas

This year's recently held South West and South Wales Regional Seminar had the theme of "The Environment". This subject was greeted with interest and enthusiasm by those members attending. We are now looking forward to next year's event and would welcome ideas from the Region's members for the next theme. If you have a subject you believe would interest members you can contact me or any member of the Regional Board with your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

Jane Jones Regional Administrator

South West

A very Happy New Year to all. Kingsdown Golf Club provided a fitting end to a classic season of events. In fact, the course could hardly have been in better condition for December, and was a tribute to the hard work of Mark Ford and all his team. Many thanks to the club for the courtesy of the course and making us so welcome.

Local estate agents doubtlessly describe adjoining properties as being, "conveniently situated for all the benefits of the golf course," but almost certainly don't mention that hard hats should be worn at all times outdoors. My greensomes partner drove first from the 18th tee with a high slice. The ball landed on the main road, bounced about two hundred feet up into the air, landed on the pitched roof of the first house, and pinged across into the garden of next door. There was a moment of stunned silence, Adrian casually picked up his tee, and said, "we'll take yours."

I may have treated Paul Godwin a little harshly last month. Don't worry mate, you're perfectly safe - we've got bigger fish to fry now. Adam Matthews (Minchinhampton) - now a confirmed serial winner, is well and truly in John Keenaghan's sights. Adam is a fresh faced, polite young man, and a pleasure to play golf with, although he's inevitably in a five-hole lead before you can say, "pass the sombrero," (The phrase "baby faced assassin" springs to mind). I wouldn't mind but he's only been playing a couple of years - however, rest assured everyone, he's got a winter of hard labour in front of him - very hard labour.

The full results of the Greensomes Stableford. 1. Rob Lane and Adam Matthews, 50 points; 2. John Keenaghan and Pete Harvard, 46 points; 3. Robin Greaves and Martin Samuels, 45 points. Nearest the Pin, at the 4th, Wayne Vincent. Nearest the Pin, at the 12th, Mark Ford.

Many thanks to all our sponsors, and especial thanks to our Patronage Partners.

Finally from Kingsdown, one of the nicest parts of the day was to bump into Dan Dobie, now retired after many years as Head Greenkeeper at Marlborough. He was just tutting about the change in seasons, and the amount of grass on the course for December, when a well-used tractor and gangs drove slowly past the window. "Look at that," screamed Dan, "you'd never have seen a gang mower with so much grass all over it in my day." Times were hard then (I think he mentioned something about giving the fairways a light top-off in mid September and then going into hibernation). Times have indeed changed.

The committee for 2005 is: Chris Sealey, Chairman; James Braithwaite, Vice Chairman; Nobby Knight, Secretary; John Keenaghan, Match Captain & Regional Board Member; John Byrne, Vice Captain; Guy Woods, Education Secretary; Paul Worster, Fixtures and Press.

Paul Jenkins stood down as Regional Board member. Many thanks to Paul, for representing the Section for a number of years. This important role now passes into the capable hands of John Keenaghan.

Chris Sealey, as Chairman of the Section, and also the Region, has put in a tremendous amount of work (often behind the scenes) for our Association, in short, for all of us. I am absolutely delighted to announce that Chris has received the South West nomination from Bernhard & Co to join the BIGGA Delegation to the GCSAA show at Orlando in the New Year. This is so well deserved, and we must thank Bernhard for their continued sponsorship.

As a result of the continuing support of our Patronage Partners, an all expenses paid place on the new British & International Turf Managers Conference, at Staverton Park, Daventry, is available to a member of the South West Section. The conference takes

place over the weekend of March 18 – 20 2005. Simply write to Nobby Knight, 17 St. Marys Gardens, Hilperton, Trowbridge, Wilts. BA14 7PG, and explain in detail how your career would benefit, and the experiences you would gain from such a trip. Good luck, may the best guy (or gal) win.

A warm welcome to Jane Jones, our new Regional Administrator. Jane joins us from managing the admin at Thornbury Golf Centre and is unquestionably a tremendous asset to the Region.

The Regional Seminar at Cannington on the Environment was a really informative day, with many commenting that it was "one of the best ever". Modesty precludes me from too many details, but a big thank you to all the speakers.

Lots of Section members have taken the trouble to contact me after my PowerPoint presentation, and the result of the Environment Competition. One of the nicest comments was actually in the car park at Kingsdown. One greenkeeper, whom I don't know that well, stopped me to say he'd enjoyed the presentation. He went on to tell me that back at work a few days later, he was building a new tee and had ended up with a small corner with nothing particular in it. He thought back to the presentation, and ended up putting in a rockery with flat stones and a few plants. This to me encapsulates the whole point of the competition. It spreads ideas, and breeds innovation.

The next Section meeting will be on February 23 2005 and is the Section Winter meeting at Weston Super Mare. Let's support our Section and sponsors, by ensuring a really good turnout on a great golf course with good dry walking.

A Health & Safety incident now. I was sitting quietly at my desk the other afternoon working on a report when one of my staff limped into the rest room and collapsed on a chair. "Big Rich", six foot six in his socks, who joined us after a long career as a bouncer (or ballroom technician as they prefer to be known), was rubbing his leg but smiling as though he'd won the lottery. "You alright?" I murmured, wondering why he had such a big grin on his face. "Yep, just got hit by a golf ball," he said, proudly rolling up his trouser leg to reveal a nasty purple bruise, with 'Titleist' stamped in reverse on his thigh.

"If you don't mind my saying so," I muttered, "you look mighty pleased for someone that's just been clobbered with a ball." The grin widened, "Yes," he smirked, "It was Tony (the landlord) from The Bell. I'm off home for a shower, this is going to cost him a few pints." As I watched him wobble off on his bike, I did experience a passing moment of sympathy for Tony. Big Rich is one of those accomplished drinkers who can "unhinge" his throat and tip a pint straight down without having to waste time swallowing.

The good news is that Marc Haring has kindly agreed to help input into this column (so normal service will be resumed). Please contact me with any news, people on the move, interesting or amusing stories - in short, anything that will help to brighten up the news. Otherwise, don't forget, there's always my holidays.

Paul Worster 01285 651908, Work: 01453 837355, 07768 394593

South Coast

Happy New Year! I'm not sure about you all but I love January. Ok forget about how bad you feel, because those jeans that have just become unbearably tight around the waist, after the over indulgence over the Christmas period. The crash diets not making you any happier and although you're detoxing you just want a drink. That New Year's resolution you made when you were very merry at midnight on New Years Eve, with the very best intentions, of course, was broken after only a day. And how can I forget the credit card bill landing on the doorstep just to rub salt into the wounds, how can we have spent so much? Yet I still love January.

It may be the imminent trip to Harrogate and BTME, I love Harrogate week. It's great to travel up and meet so many friends and colleagues and share another year's experiences with each other. The show is always good and the seminars are the icing on the cake, it's just a shame more people don't travel up from the Section. I'm particularly looking forward to seeing our former Section Chairman, Kerran Daly MG, becoming the BIGGA Chairman for 2005. Kerran takes over from Andy Campbell MG who has done a tremendous job during some difficult times and has helped move the Association forward. I'm sure Andy will enjoy stepping back from the hectic role of Chairman, so well done Andy, enjoy the rest! I'm sure Kerran will settle in very quickly and continue with the good work that has seen the Association move to a very strong position, have a great year Kerran!

On to Section news. Our last golf day of 2004 was held at Barton-on-Sea Golf Club, in December, and once again we were very lucky with the weather. Tony Gadd and his team had been working flat out preparing the course for our arrival and planning some fiendish pins, ah don't you just love them! The day was sponsored by New Forest Farm Machinery and Sheerwater and it was good to see our sponsors on the golf course, although Rob Crouch wasn't looking too happy. Was it the high spirits of the previous night's Christmas party catching up with him? No. Or was his golf not quite up to the usual standard? Not this either. It was the news that Harry Rednapp had just been introduced as the new Southampton manager. Football, it's a funny old game!

Anyway, on to the golf. We had fantastic support with 75 playing and winners on the day were: Division 1. 1. Simon Ridland, 38pts; 2. Phil Nason, 37pts. Division 2. 1. Mark Zealander, 42pts; 2. Paul Staples, 41pts. Division 3. 1. Peter Stevens, 34pts; 2. Chris Sherrington, 33pts. Reps Prize. Mike Ring, 38pts. Longest Drive. Mark Davies. Nearest the Pin. Steve Privett.

Many thanks to Barton-on-Sea for their superb hospitality, to Tony Gadd and his team for all their hard work in preparing the course so well for us and the caterers and bar staff for providing us with an excellent meal and looking after us so well. A huge vote of thanks to New Forest Farm Machinery and Sheerwater for their continued sponsorship of the day. Many thanks Nick and Mark, we really do appreciate. Thanks must also go to Alan Magee for all his hard work with the scoring and selling the raffle tickets, I don't think anyone escaped Al and his raffle books. Last but by no means least, Chris Sturgess. Chris does a tremendous job organising our golf days and we really do appreciate it Chris. We all just turn up on the day and take for granted all the hard work that has been carried out to make the day possible, so many thanks Chris!

During the presentation ceremony the Jim Fry Pairs Trophy was presented to Dave Hewitt and Joe Cooper after their success in the final over Stuart Hooker and Justin Lewellyn. The final was excellent with both pairings being well up in the match, but

victory was sealed on the last hole. Well played! Entry forms for next year's competition should have arrived to you by now, along with our new fixture cards and the Section seminar flyers. Our fixture cards have a new sponsor this year, Phil Sharp Golf Course Equipment. Phil sells a wide range of course equipment and tools and we are very happy and excited to be forging a close working relationship with him, thanks Phil.

As I mentioned before, our Section seminar is at Canford Magna Golf Club, on February 24. Full details should be with you now and the speakers for the day are; Billy McMillan, Ian Tomlinson, Gordon Irvine, Malcolm Peake, Kerran Daly MG and Stuart Ashworth. Cost for the day is £15 for members and £20 for a non member, which includes lunch, coffee etc. I recommend booking early as numbers are limited and with the excellent line of speakers spaces will go very quickly. If you have any queries about the seminar then please contact me or look at the BIGGA website which has full details.

I would just like to pass on all of the Section's thoughts to Colin White as he goes through treatment for his illness at the moment. We have missed seeing you at both our golf days and courses Colin and we look forward to seeing you back very soon.

Our thoughts must also go out to Ian Greenwood's family after he passed away recently. Ian was instrumental in setting up our original Section and will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Alex McCombie Tel 01202 661106 07966 386232 a.mccombie@ntlworld.com

Devon and Cornwall

Time certainly flies by, and just think, as soon as we take all the Christmas decorations down it will be time for the BTME at Harrogate. As most of you will be aware by now Amenity Technology will not be sponsoring the coach from the South West Region in January, this is hardly surprising when one considers that in 2004 only fifteen members travelled on the coach. Instead the company will be subsidising the Hotel, for further information please contact Jane Jones our Regional Administrator.

Wednesday November 17, the South and South Wales Regions held a very successful seminar at Cannington College. The day's lectures were on Environmental Issues and were presented by excellent speakers, something we all have to think about in the very near future. It was very rewarding for all the organisers to see a very good attendance, both greenkeepers and students. At the end of the day we were delighted to welcome our Chief Executive, John Pemberton, and Rachael Palmer. To everyone's surprise John announced the winners of the National BIGGA Environment Awards, and to the delight of all the Region the results were as follows: Minchinhampton Golf Club were the National Winners, and the award was presented to Paul Worster, the Course Manager, Jeff Mills, on behalf of The Taunton and Pickering Golf Club, received the award for The Best Environmental Initiative, and Bath Golf Club won the award for The Best Use Of Recycling Materials. The award was collected by the Deputy Head Greenkeeper. Congratulations go to all that participated in the 2004 Competition.

On Wednesday 10 our Section held its AGM, at Wrangaton Golf Club on the Edge of Dartmoor. The day commenced with a Foursomes Stableford competition in very windy conditions, nothing unusual when playing this course as the greenkeeping staff will tell you, but at least it kept the rain away, and eventually the blue skies appeared and the sun shone.

The winners of the Competition were: 1. Buster Lewer and Garry Tuckett, 34 points; 2. Kevin Yeoman and Justin Austin, 32 points; 3. Kevin Miller and Adam Bridgwater, 32 points. Alan Dommett, of Devon Garden Machinery, whose company sponsored the day, presented the prizes, many thanks Alan.

A big thank you to Wrangaton Golf Club and all the staff that made us so welcome, and of course a special thanks go to Gerald Ayliffe, the Head Greenkeeper, who presented the course in excellent condition, not always easy in the climatic conditions of Dartmoor, which seems to have one of the heaviest rain falls in Devon.

I would at this point like to say how good it was to see Gordon Child joining us again and playing golf, after his hip and leg operations. Last but not least, congratulations to Richard Whyman who will become Vice Chairman next year of BIGGA and to Jeff Mills who joins the National Board well done to both.

Donovan. O. Hunt

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland

Our Section AGM was held at Fortwilliam GC, in Belfast, on November 30. The new committee for 2005 was elected and, as past Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members who supported the Section throughout the past year. I would also like to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to our Secretary, Emmett Curran, for all his hard work and commitment over the last couple of years.

The committee for 2005 is as follows: Chairman, Michael O'Neill, Fortwilliam GC; Secretary, Gary Crawford, Royal Co Down GC; Treasurer, Emmett Curran, Downpatrick GC; Magazine and Education Officer, Ken Henderson, Allen Park GC; Match and Handicap Secretary, Noel Crawford, Royal Co Down GC.

This year's winner of our Golfer of the Year Trophy was presented to our new Chairman, Michael O'Neill. Michael played some excellent golf throughout the year and just beat Warren Burnside, from Malone GC.

Moving on to education, it is hoped to run a one or two day course towards the end of February 2005. Headquarters are currently organising the subject, date and venue, so members will be informed over the coming weeks.

There will also be an autumn seminar organised for late October/early November 2005. If any member would like to suggest a speaker or topic they would like to hear, please get in touch with me at Allen Park on 02894429001 or contact any other committee member. Finally I would like to congratulate Terry Crawford, Course Manager at Clondeboyce GC, on his selection onto the 2005 BIGGA Delegation, sponsored by Bernhard, to Orlando, Florida.

Ken Henderson