



## News from the Chief Executive

Some of you may have read in the national press that the Marston Group of hotels has been bought by Q Hotels for the sum of £180m. Q Hotels (formerly Quality Hotels I am led to believe) include in its existing portfolio the Queens Hotel in Leeds, Forest Pines Hotel and Golf Club, Scunthorpe and the Westerwood Hotel and Golf Club, Glasgow. Marston Hotels own and operate Aldwark Manor Hotel and so, by default, we have a new landlord of the land upon which BIGGA house sits. I have no immediate concerns over our tenancy that has a further 990 plus years left to run, in fact a change in ownership will hopefully bring a change in attitude towards our previous attempts to convert the Association into a limited company.

Harrogate Week dominates much of everyone's time at HQ and I am pleased to report that all four exhibition halls are full with the exception of two small spaces that I am confident will soon be taken. Bookings for the education programme are ahead of the same time last year and I know from my travels to various regions over the last few weeks, that there is a big push by members to attend Harrogate for at least one day.

I applaud the efforts being made by Regions, Sections and members in order to demonstrate their support for this vital event in the Association's calendar. Please remember that it's not just for greenkeepers, bring along your Secretary/Manager, your Chairman of Green or your groundsman friend or contact. There is something for everyone both in the exhibition and in the 'Continue to Learn' programme.

The Association's accounts for the year ended on September 30, 2006 and have produced a satisfactory surplus for the period and any member wishing a copy before the AGM should contact either your Regional Administrator, Section Secretary or Tony or Stephen at HQ. I would draw member's attention to the fact that the timing of the AGM has changed from 5.15pm on Wednesday, January 25, 2007 to 6pm on the same day and will continue to be held in the Queen's Suite at Harrogate International Centre.

Rachael Palmer who has efficiently run the Membership department for the last four and a half years, has decided to accept the offer of another job and will therefore be leaving in early December. I would like to thank Rachael for all her hard work and wish her every success in her new position. This naturally leaves Gemma and her colleagues under significant pressure until the staffing level can be rectified and I would ask for some patience from members at what is traditionally the busiest time of the year.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It is hard to believe that as I write this there are only five weeks left of 2006!

**John Pemberton**



### Harrogate Week 2007

The Scottish Region once again offers their members a subsidised package deal for Harrogate Week 2007.

The Package includes: Entry to Continue to Learn Seminars (seven in total); three nights Bed and Breakfast in en-suite twin rooms on 23rd, 24th and 25th January, 2007 in the Holiday Inn, Harrogate, (formerly Moat House Hotel). Package cost: £261.00. Accommodation package only £156.00.

To obtain booking forms contact the Regional Administrator, Peter J.Boyd on: 0141 616 3440 or 07776 2422120 or email: [pj.boyd@btinternet.com](mailto:pj.boyd@btinternet.com)

### Ayrshire

Hello everyone, hope you're all well and prepared for the Christmas season! I think most of you will just be wanting the grass to stop growing for Christmas, there seems to have been a definite shift in the growing season with temperatures not rising till later in the spring and sustained growth continuing much later into autumn.

Our Patrons' Award winners this year are: Duncan Gray, The Pines, and Gordon Haughie, Southernness. Well done guys and enjoy your stay in Harrogate. You could probably pass on the Jim Arthur book to your apprentice greenkeepers as I'm sure you both know it all by now eh?

The Annual Scottish Conference will be held at Lauder College Dunfermline on March 6. This has fast become a very popular event so get back to Peter sharp if you don't want to miss out.

Goswick GC, at Berwick-upon-Tweed, will host the Scottish National Championship on June 21. Yes! I'm sure the powers that be ken that's in England but must figure if it's okay for them to play in the Scottish Football Leagues then surely we can visit for a round of golf. Controversial?

A total of 12 were present at the AGM on Halloween. It was unanimously agreed that Derek should continue as Secretary, while Stephen Higgins takes on the Chairmanship. Vice-Chairman will be myself, as Stevie boy managed to track me down at the Troon Beer Festival and after a couple of pints of Skullsplitter there's not much I wouldn't say no to... apart from the obvious, obviously!

Additions to the committee are Frank Clarkson and Duncan Gray.

Our 12 aside golf match vs the Northern Irish lads went ahead on October 20 at Irvine GC. The weather was good with no wind and the course well prepared. However after a grueling afternoon's play the visitors proved too strong for us and went on to win 4.5 to 1. All participants enjoyed the day and our thanks go to Derek Wilson and the committee at Bogside for allowing us use of the course and facilities. Well done also to Terry Crawford for his part in organising their trip over. There will definitely be a rematch in County Down next year so I'll keep you informed of dates as they arise. So congratulations to the Irish boys but don't get to attached to that magnificent Shield!

A big thank you also to George Brown and General Manager, Stewart Selbie, for getting the tourists a game at Turnberry the following day. I'm sure there were a few cobwebs blowing across the links after a night out in Ayr.

That's it for now so have yourselves a merry little Xmas and happy New Year alright!

Denis Tweddell

07939 104701 or [denis.t@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:denis.t@hotmail.co.uk)

## Central

I would like to start this month's news by congratulating Stuart Greenwood on his appointment to Scottish Chairman, and also to thank Iain Barr for all his support to the Region during his time in office. There is a lot of work carried out throughout the Association, by the members, in office, on a voluntary basis and in an attempt to meet the needs of our members. If you are unsure about any aspect of the Association's work, or have some suggestions to make, I would encourage you to contact your local Section committee and raise the matter. This is the most constructive way to deal with things and ensures that concerns at local level can be communicated to Regional boards and upwards to National level when necessary. Likewise we will endeavour to keep you informed, and will be only too happy to assist you in any way we can. The Association is strengthened by open communication, and uniting together to help our fellow greenkeepers.

Recent new members to the Section are: Matthew Baird, Elmwood GC, James Bledge, Kingsbarns, Brian Marmon, Gleneagles Hotel, and Martin Turna, St Andrews Links. Welcome to the section and we look forward to meeting you at future events.

Congratulations to John Philp - Carnoustie, Innes Knight - Kingsbarns and Euan Grant - The Old Course, and all their respective teams for hosting another successful Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.

The autumn outing was contested over Dunfermline GC, Pitfirrane. The turnout was excellent, especially as it coincided with the aforementioned event, and many of our members come from the courses concerned. The course was in excellent condition, and with the very pleasant weather and the excellent hospitality in the clubhouse, it made for a very enjoyable day. Many thanks go to Kenny Duncan and his team, and the club, for a memorable day.

Congratulations to the prize winners as follows; Scratch - Kenny Stirling, Kingsbarns; Handicap - Michael Love, Grangemouth. 1.1 Kenny Mitchell, St Andrews; 1.2 Kenny Duncan, Dunfermline GC; 1.3 David Gray, Lochgelly. 2.1 Tom Comerford, Grangemouth; 2.2 Dougie Barr, Dundee Council; 2.3 Derek Scott, Scoonie.

The Guest Prize went to C. Murray, from Grangemouth, and the Trade Prize to Peter Taylor. Thanks are also due to the Patrons, and to Peter Boyd, Regional Administrator. Their continued support within the Section ensures the success of these events. Many thanks to Jim Finlayson, a trade member, who despite not feeling at his best, helped with the organisation of the day and met all golfers returning to the clubhouse.

The Section's educational events continue. The combined event with Club Managers Association of Europe at Murrayshall was very informative, and it was good to hear different perspectives on future trends in Golf. For your diary note the following future events: Thursday, December 14 at 7pm, Seminar at Elmwood GC - topic: The influential Head Greenkeeper / Course Manager, presented by Frank Newberry. March 28, 2007 at 3pm - topic: Rules presentation, Presented by Grant Moir, R and A rules official.

Before you read this another evening event with Richard Windows, our Regional STRI Agronomist, will have taken place. These events are free for our members.

I was fortunate enough to attend the Business Management Institute International Conference at Fairmont, St Andrews, at which four of our colleagues had been invited to speak. Neil Ballingall, Fairmont, St Andrews, Scot Fenwick, Gleneagles, Euan Grant, St Andrews, and Ken Siems, Loch Lomond, all delivered very informative and entertaining presentations to a truly international group of Club Managers, who were very impressed.

Your committee is keen to arrange as many of these events as you need, and to provide relevant learning opportunities for our members. Please give them your support and let them know what you want. By the time you are reading this our AGM will have come and gone. More news next month.

To keep up to date and in touch, visit our website.

[www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk)

All the best,  
Andrew Mellon

## East

I ended last month's report by stating I was paying a visit to sunny Crete, what a joke! The weather was horrendous, but as usual the hospitality of our Greek friends was fantastic and made up for the disappointing weather conditions.

The Section AGM was held on Wednesday, October 25, at Ratho Park GC with, once again, an extremely poor turnout being recorded, The new committee is as follows: Chairman - Graeme Wood, Vice Chairman - Stuart Ferguson, Secretary - Kevin Hodges, General Committee - Jimmy Neilson and Tom Murray.

The committee is currently looking for enthusiastic volunteers to fill the positions of Match Secretary and Education Convenor.

One of the key issues raised at the AGM was the pressure placed on Course Managers by their employers, who often have totally unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved. As a current employer I appreciate there is always two sides to a story but, more than often not in our industry - Golf Clubs pay scant regard to employment law! After the AGM, three teams of three played 12 holes and the winners were the Chairman's team comprising G. Wood, T. Murray and J. Darling. On behalf of the Section I would like to thank Ratho Park for granting us courtesy of the course and to Richard Aitken Seedsmen for sponsoring the days events.

West Linton GC has recently purchased a heart defibrillator and is the first club in the Borders region to do so. The reasoning behind the idea came about when one of the members had a heart attack and passed away in the club's car park. Those present felt so helpless that a decision was taken to purchase the machine literally talks the operator through the process of trying to restart the heart.

The cost to the club has been reduced by a donation of £1000 this year and a promise of £250 next year from the Chris Yeaman Junior Charity Fund.

In the last week of October, 10 members of staff, three of whom were greens staff, received training in the use of the machine. As most of the attendees were locals and the golf club is near the village, it is also anticipated that the machine will be of service to the local community.

The big news this month is that Berwick GC (Goswick) have been awarded the BIGGA Scottish National Tournament in 2007. This, as a direct result of all the hard work put in by George and his team, and the fact that they have been very loyal supporters of BIGGA Tournaments over the years.

I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Section, to offer many congratulations to Mark Pagan, Head Greenkeeper at Eyemouth GC, and his wife Caroline, who are celebrating the arrival of their new baby son, Jack, who was born on October 22.

### **West Lothian Golf Club Report**

One man's commitment to home grown talent paid dividends when he won a top prize in the small employers Section of the Modern Apprenticeship Awards 2006.

Alan Gibson - on behalf of West Lothian GC, Bo'ness - scooped the award in the Scottish Modern Apprenticeship programme, which celebrated the achievement of individual modern apprentices also showcasing the commitment and contribution made by employers and training providers in the industry.

He won first prize in the "employer of modern apprentices - acknowledging the commitment and support of employers" category for small businesses.

"Golf is a valuable part of the ever growing leisure industry and it needs good greenkeepers to secure its future," said Alan, who was nominated by Oatridge College, which along with his employers, supports his work with trainee greenkeepers.

"Scotland is proud of its golfing heritage and equally proud of the course it has to offer," he added. "But without highly skilled greenkeepers, the industry would have to look elsewhere for skilled professionals."

"I believe that home grown talent is best and I would encourage all course and club managers and committees to look at the training opportunities

available through schemes such as modern apprentices under my care during that time," he said.

"I have been fortunate to have retained three of my former apprentices - one of whom, Iain Marshall, is now my deputy and two others, Jeff Ryce and Wayne Meikle are assistants."

His First Apprentice, Richard McLuckie, took over his own course Linlithgow Golf Club in 2000, and was promoted to General Manager in 2005, while others have moved on in greenkeeping to course such as Dalmahoy and Gleneagles.

On reaching the final three in the awards - which are sponsored by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise - Alan was interviewed by a member of the judging panel who visited the golf club and also spoke to staff.

"As a golf course manager, I feel I have a responsibility to the sport in which I work to ensure its future is in safe hands by producing young professionals ready to meet the challenges of maintaining their own golf courses," Alan said.

Television star Stephen Jardine, hosted an award ceremony at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Edinburgh in October, where Deputy Minister for Education and Young People, Robert Brown, congratulated the winners.

The Managing Secretary, Ian Osborough, said that the club was honoured that Alan Gibson, their Course Manager, had received this award on behalf of the club. His commitment, enthusiasm and expertise over many years in bringing through our Apprentices to a very high standard, were to be commended. They reflect on the club, but more to the point, reflect the high caliber of the course manager that we have. He should be justly proud of his achievement.

After my negative comments earlier in this month's report, it is nice to see a Course Manager being awarded for his efforts and more importantly being appreciated by his employers.

Until next month.

Don't work too hard!

Mike Dooner

## North

How's it going folks? No sign of any hard weather yet. As I write this report it is November 6 and it is 16 degrees outside with bright warm sunshine. Global warming seems to be upon us. My only concern is that clubs will now try and prolong the golf season and want normal conditions without any autumn renovation work done until the end of the year. Has anybody had this request from his or her committee yet?

I have a feeling this mild weather will bring another epidemic of leather jackets later this year.

Chris Murdoch, from Murcar GC, is now a father after his partner, Kerry, gave birth to an 8lb girl recently. Well done to them all and we wish them well for the future.

The AGM for the Section was held at Royal Aberdeen GC in late October. There was a reasonable turnout of 27 members, which meant we were able to have a Stableford competition. A good day was had by all with the weather being fairly kind overall. There seems to be a trend now even with the outings that the numbers are dropping and there appears to be a lack of interest in the Section. Over the past few years there is a hard core of the membership that attend the outings wherever they are, but it would be nice for the committee

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to see more members from further a field attend to swell the numbers and ensure that the Section continues to progress over the coming years.

Results from the AGM: 3.1 - Niall Bruce, Montrose Links; 3.2 - Hugh McLatchie, Peterhead; 2.1 - George Simpson, Oldmeldrum; 2.2 - Billy Graig, Kirriemuir; 1.1 - Robert Patterson, Royal Aberdeen; 1.2 - Kevin Thompson, Moray; Trade Winner- Raymond Warrender, Alpha Plus Groundcare.  
200 Club: £30- Wilson Morrison, £30 - Kevin Fowler, £30 - James Piece and £100 - Dale Robertson.

Two new members to report this month: Calum T Fraser, Apprentice at Tain GC, and Robert O'Donnell, Head Greenkeeper at Oldmeldrum GC.

Colin Forbes, from Peterculter GC, has moved on and taken up the post of Head Greenkeeper at Aboyne GC. We wish him well in his new appointment.

The next thing on the horizon will be BTME at Harrogate, which I'm sure, will be well attended.

Not much else from me this month, if you have any stories let me know and I will print them as it can be quite difficult to find new and interesting things to talk about each month.

Cheers,  
Robert Patterson, Royal Aberdeen GC

## West

Welcome to this month's report. Congratulations to Gerry Bruen, a former West Section member and committee member. Gerry recently got married to Lindsay, the Section wish you all the best with your future together and hope you are enjoying life in Ireland.

Our autumn outing was held at Higgs Castle GC the weather wasn't too good on the day but Robert McClery and his staff had the course in first class condition well done to all concerned. To Captain, Donald Ross, who presented the prizes many thanks for allowing us courtesy of your course and your warm hospitality. The winners on the day were: Scratch - Stuart Taylor; 1 - Scott Mcketerick; 2 - Neil MacLennan and 3 - Graeme Ferguson. Trade prize went to Alistair Taylor and Longest Drive to Andy Peace.

The winner of the new Daval Two Round Trophy was Scott McKeterick, well done to all the prize winner and many thanks to the trade for donations of prizes, last but not least the hard work of the committee but in on the day.

Welcome to new members David Moles and Mathew Salmon, we hope to see you at some of our future events.

This year's AGM was held at Drumpellier GC and there were 28 members in attendance. There were several points brought up which will be discussed at our next committee meeting and reported on in the next Greenkeepers report, Brian Hillan, the Course Manager at Drumpellier, had arranged a fun golf day after the AGM was finished 16 members played and had a very enjoyable day.

The course was in first class condition and considering the weather over the past couple of months this was no mean feat, please pass on our thanks to your captain and committee.

Also I would like to thank Stuart Aird, of Soutars Sports, for sponsoring the day.

The Committee for 2006-2007 are: Douglas MacIntosh - Chairman, Eddie McGhee - Vice Chairman, Fraser Ross - Past-Chairman, Gavin Jarvis - Secretary, Stuart Taylor - Education, Gordon Howat - Match and Handicap, John Barr, Derek Duthie, Brian Boland. Committee members, Brian Hillan - New Member.

On a personal note it has been a pleasure to have been the West Section Chairman for the past two years.

I would like to thank Brian Boland for proposing me as his Vice Chairman and big thanks for his continued hard work on behalf of the Section and we're happy he has decided to stay on.

To all other committee members for their help and support which has been first class, also to Gavin Jarvis for his continued hard work and to Peter Boyd, our Regional Administrator, for keeping me right along the way.

On the Education front we are arranging a trip to the new course being

built at Loch Lomond, the Carrick, members will be notified as soon as dates are confirmed.

Please try to come along which should be a first class day.

Well that's all for now, please get in touch with any news.

Fraser Ross, Renfrew GC

Mobile: 07970 366 355

## NORTHERN REGION

### North East

On October 25 we held the Section AGM at Tyneside GC, as usual there was a very poor turnout, six people at least made the effort - my thanks to them, also to the Regional Administrator, Peter Larter, who travelled almost 400 miles on his round trip.

Well next year the AGM will most likely be at the autumn competition and that will be held in October, and before the prize giving, then we will at least have better turnout.

I don't know if any of you realise but it will be my 25th year as the Secretary of the Section and dogsbody, and I'm seriously thinking of making next year my last, it's now time for a change. Now I know they're a few moaners out there and so here is your chance to have a go at running the Section.

If anyone is interested just get in touch with me or the rest of the committee - being: Russ Black or Steve Pope.

Talking about retirement Brian Udberg, of Tynemouth GC, is retiring in May next year, as is John Moutrie, of Hexham GC.

Congratulations to Tony McLure, of Whickham GC, on winning the scratch 36 hole National Greenkeepers Championship recently played for in October.

Jimmy Richardson

### Cleveland

By now several of the proposed meetings and get togethers should have taken place. Firstly, the indoor football competition should have been played at Middlesbrough FC's wonderful training complex at Hurworth. Teams from the North East Section, TSL and the 'Boro groundstaff were hoping to wup the Cleveland Section's Galacticos. This is a description of the size of our back four (Pembo and friends), nothing to do with the quality. Reports in the next issue but I hope it was played in good spirit! Thanks to Boro for the opportunity to play in this fantastic venue. Secondly the TSL quiz should have been fought out with the groundsmen at Mount Oswald GC. Have we defended our title?

Lastly, the Section AGM should have taken place on November 28 - I hope this was well supported, as our turnouts seem to be dwindling. It's your Section - please help by supporting all meetings if you can.

The 'Night at the Dogs' took place on November 10. 13 Section members attended ably supported by Alastair Whitby, from Lloyds. A good night was had by all and the lads didn't report too heavy losses. Many thanks must go to Brendan Brown, of Norlube, for kindly sponsoring the minibus.

Finally, it will soon be Christmas again. Where does the time go? May I take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a happy and peaceful festive season. It will soon be time to start thinking about BTME at Harrogate. The TSL bus will be going on the Wednesday as usual. Please book your places with Karen in the Turfcare office on: 01207 505837. Pick up points are usually Morpeth GC, City of Newcastle GC, Chester-le-Street GC and finally the old 'Cock of the North' site on the A167.

All the best

Any news to TC on: 07831214879

Terry El Prez Charlton



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



**Peter Larter**  
**NORTHERN & MIDLAND**  
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## Sheffield

Another year coming to an end, unfortunately I don't have a lot of news to end the year with. This year has been one of quite a few retirements from within the Section and another to add to the list is Les Easthope, from Hillsborough GC. Les has basically worked at Hillsborough since he left school - after all that loyal service I think you deserve a long and enjoyable retirement Les, all the best from everyone in the Sheffield Section.

We will be running a trip to the new Wembley Stadium (yes it will be finished!) next year in October, so I will keep you informed of dates etc when we have definite details.

Finally may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

John Lax

## North Wales

A big thank you in advance goes to Conwy GC for hosting our Christmas golf tournament, held on December 5. A full report will be in the January issue.

Talking of January and only a matter of weeks to go now before the annual show, the industries biggest one! the BTME in Harrogate, as usual the Section has organised the bus to take you up there. This year it has been kindly sponsored by Danny Tomkins of Tower Chemicals - If you wish to use this facility please contact Jez on: 07876 776265 at your earliest convenience as spaces will go quickly so don't miss out - book early £5 for members £10 for guests - The bus will be leaving a bit earlier this time to give you a full day up at Harrogate, especially for you older folk who like to have the extra time to visit Betty's tea shop for your afternoon scones and cream and as it is going up early it will also be coming back at a more reasonable time leaving around 5pm.

Congratulations to Gareth Woosnam who over at the Ryder Cup, was told by Arnold Palmer that he was better looking than his brother, Ian, as he exchanged his glass of champagne on the balcony of the 'K' Club for a pint of the black stuff Gareth's first trip to the Emerald Isle with all the family, being over there to give his brother a few tips (see results in previous issue Oswestry BIGGA Tournament as to why!).

Well short and sweet this month, but one little golfing tale to end with; I had the pleasure of being invited to go on a two day trip over to Belfast and play golf at the legendary Royal County Down Golf Links, as golf books write it as one of the world's top courses. The date unfortunately clashed with me moving house and I was unable to go, but none the less a four ball team of guys who will not be named for embarrassing reasons elected to go, flights were found on Ryan Air, but as it was a busy commuter time slot they came in a little more expensive than was expected, but never mind it was Royal County Down after all, a hire car was dually booked from Belfast airport to drive the 40 minute trip and the Course Manager there found them a good hotel close by and this was also booked, so all in place and looking forward to the challenge ahead tackling the famous links and watching the narrative Ronan Rafferty video of how to play each hole, the scene was set. They decided to all sleep over at the person's house who was closest to Manchester Airport so they could have an early start for the 6am flight, now who ever it was that set the alarm clock was not in the good books with the rest of the guys? Arriving late at the wrong terminal then getting to the correct terminal five minutes after the flight had closed did not bear well, especially as the weather that day was glorious in Northern Ireland.

But the weary travellers were not to be dashed and with a friendly phone call to the Kerry bros down in Harlech an alternative tee time was booked and the long drive back to Wales started. Still feeling a little down, a pick me up McDonalds helped at Caernarfon and when they decided the format of 10p birdies and 20p bits for the game, all was better... I believe Dave Austin won, Andy Peel was second and Stuart Yarwood and Andy Ralphs were tied 3rd.

All the best for Christmas and the New Year - See you in the M Hall @ BTME

Mesen Cymru  
 Andrew Acorn



## East Midlands

I start this month's report by offering the Sections congratulations to Gavin Robson and his team from Burton-on-Trent GC, for hosting a successful National Championship. The weather preceding the Championship could only be described as awful and I, for a fact, know that Gavin had been working hard and looking forward to hosting the event for many months prior and it wasn't easy to show off your efforts with such poor weather beforehand.

However, with the help of a few extras a couple of days before, the course looked immaculate and to everyone's delight the sun shone for the two Championship days bar the odd shower, and everything worked out fine.

Coupled with a warm welcome and some fine hospitality, the Championship was a great success for all those who attended.

Congratulations to all the prize winners and to all that worked so hard to make it so enjoyable. We hope the Nationals will soon return to the East Midlands.

It's with great sadness that I close this report, passing on the Section's condolences to Past BIGGA Chairman, Paddy McCarron, whose wife, Beverly, recently passed away.

After a short illness, John Carter, known to greenkeepers in the Norfolk area - having started his career there - and also the Leicestershire area, passed away in early November at the age of 45. The Section's thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Richard Barker

## Midland

Some years ago I tried to introduce "Thought/Joke of the month" to which £10 would be awarded to the provider, and such published within our notes. To date I have not received any. So I would like to try again, but with "Excuse of the Month". I shall start you off with a genuine one (honest). Get this: "I couldn't make Saturday because I was in such a deep sleep (drunk?) that I didn't wake up, the wife tried throwing six pans of cold water over me, but I still didn't wake. Sorry Tony." No, it wasn't me! If anyone had thrown cold water on me I would be at her Majesty's pleasure! Just ask John Wilkes. He by the way has just had a little boy.

Our old friend, Craig Beet, and his delightful fiancée, Simone Smith, have just been wed. Wonderful wedding (I nearly had tears, steady now), super reception at Hagley GC. We all wish you both the greatest of happiness for the future.

On October 19, we played our annual match against the East Midlands Section. I'm afraid that we lost the match by two points, if Gashey (five up after six) had won his match in the afternoon, such would have been a draw. I carried him in the morning, and then won my match in the afternoon (I'm fed up with Mike knocking me out off the Scotts Doubles). Sorry mate, it had to be done! As always the match was carried out in the best of spirits and was very enjoyable indeed, great hosts. Our thanks to Kirby Muxloe GC for their hospitality, and Tony Cheese/Rigby Taylor for organising and sponsoring the event. Congratulations to Antony Bindley and his fine team for an excellently presented course. Looking forward to next year's match, which is at home (Midland Section, you maggot), so get practising folks. You of course can do such at our events throughout the year!



Clive Osgood  
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Jane Jones  
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It gives me great pleasure to welcome two new members to our Section, Ashley Merry (D.H.) of Evesham GC, and Daniel Totney (AG) from the lovely Sandwell Park GC. Also, all the best to Mike Hill on his retirement from Stourbridge. Mike has been a long time supporter of the Section, and has served many a fine course over his service within Greenkeeping. Wishing you all the best Sir, I hear that the shares at the Foley Arms have just gone up. See you in there chap.

It is with great pride that I am able to announce Mr Hill's successor will be Mr Beet at Stourbridge GC. Think that being a Deputy was a pain in the arse! The examination starts now (CMEGC). I'll let you now when I get there. Congratulations mate.

Don't forget to contact me with your "Excuse of the Month" or anything else on: 07908 421 015, or email: sean.mcdade@homecall.co.uk. The Hoff has a lot to answer to.

"Spot the Difference". It's Swaney. Congrat's on passing your chainsaw test mate. Well done.

Wishing all a very Merry Christmas.

Sean McDade

## East of England

The Section AGM was held at Spalding GC, with a Texas Scramble being the format for the day. A draw for teams was made and we all set off to do battle. Firstly I must apologise to one of the boat owners on the second hole. I did not mean to broadside your vessel with a surface to air Proc V1, and I am sure a suitable salvage team can be arranged to raise her from the deep. The day was kindly sponsored by Burdens and our thanks go to Jim North for the prize table. The day was won by, yes you've guessed it, Les Howkins! Gary Cooper, Pete Fell and Ian Collett - I think we should rename 2006 as the Les Howkins year, seriously, well done mate - although our new Competitions Secretary will have to do some serious culling of your handicap, won't you Steve. I would also like to say a big thank you to spalding for the day. The course was in magnificent condition and the food was superb.

We then moved onto the AGM with no changes to the committee and it went through quite quickly. A few points were raised from the floor and hopefully answered to the member's satisfaction.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Allan Walker  
07974816927

## BB&O

November! I recently read this entertaining article on the difficulty of weather forecasting by Bob Ryan, of the Meteorological Society, so here goes. Imagine a rotating sphere that is 8000 miles in diameter, has a bumpy surface, is surrounded by a 30 mile deep mixture of different gases whose concentrations vary both spatially and over time, and is heated, along with its surrounding gases, by a nuclear reactor 93 million miles away. Imagine also that this sphere is revolving around the nuclear reactor and that some locations are heated more during one part of the revolution and other locations are heated during another part of the revolution. And imagine that this mixture of gases continually receives inputs from the surface below, generally calmly but sometimes through violent and highly localized injections. Then, imagine that after watching the gaseous mixture, you are expected to predict its state at one location on the sphere one, two, or more days into the future. This is essentially the task encountered day by day by a weather forecaster, and then there is the Greenkeeper?

Welcome aboard to Paul Riching, the new Course Manager for Wexham Park GC - who has recently taken over from Roy Kates. Paul is looking forward to his challenging role maintaining this parkland golf course in Slough, Berkshire. Roy where are you? Don't forget to keep in touch!

A big character and a big farewell goes to Toro representative the unmistakable John Cockburn who, after over 20 years service with A T Oliver, has retired, John will be looking forward to relaxing and rebuilding his boat, so from all the boys in red, green and orange that you have dealt with over many years, wishing you the very best and have a superb retirement!

The Rigby Taylor Pairs final was hosted at the exclusive Bearwood Lakes GC in Berkshire and competing for the title were Steve Horwood and Miles Wood from Chiltern Forrest GC, and Matt Smith and Simon Mallock from Sonning GC. Congratulations to the Hearted Hoofs, from Sonning, who hammered the elderly Team Forrester with an impressive five and four, also Course Manager Dan Lightfoot and his team for arranging a memorable day for the finalists at Bearwood Lakes GC and Gareth, the RT man, for organising this yearly popular event.

Just another reminder that BTME is only a month away, if you have never been before or haven't frequented the show for some time, I ask you to give it a another thought as the Greenkeeping profession make there way to Harrogate for a greater learning experience and a chance to see what the industry has to offer at first hand, so down your tools and come along to what will be a great show in the heart of Yorkshire.

The BB&O mums have been very busy in the Section, some of the biggest ever Christmas presents have arrived early, so here goes and let's hope I get the spelling right, firstly Madeleine Ava was born to proud parents Steve and Abi Gardener, from Flackwell Heath GC, followed by Harriett Florence Rose to Dan Lightfoot, from Bearwood Lakes GC and yet more news as Lee Bishop, from Burnham Beeches GC, has been extremely busy as wife Jo has given birth to twins, Archie and Max, who have only just arrived. Best wishes and congratulations to you all.

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

Mark Day



## Harrogate 2007

Symbio have kindly agreed to arrange a coach to travel up to Harrogate on January 23, returning on the 24th. Stopping at various pick up points around the M25 on the way, travel will be free of charge - courtesy of Symbio. Some seats will be available for first time visitors to the exhibition up to the position of deputy, for which the South East Region will contribute towards overnight accomodation.

Please contact Martin Ward on: 07956 898004/martin@symbio.co.uk or Clive Osgood on: 07841 948410/cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

## South East Regional Seminar

Despite a sudden drop in temperature and one of the highest tides of the season over 100 were in attendance for the South East Regional Seminar held at the Thorpeness Country Club on the east coast of Suffolk on November 1.

Following a welcome and introduction by Chairman Ian Willett our Chief Executive, John Pemberton, gave a very informative presentation about The Association past, present, and future with particular regard to the need for all members to support Harrogate 2007. This was followed by Ray Harding, Ecologist to the award whining Thorpeness GC illustrating some of the good work being carried out by Ian and his team at the Club. Dr Kate Entwistle was next with valuable state of the art information on Turf Diseases name changes included! Kate also spent time discussing the increasing problems, some superficial, caused by Nematodes at various sites around UK.

After refreshment at lunch it was time for the duo of Billy and Ian McMillan, who involved the floor in discussion on current topics including thought issues in the south and in particular Sustainable Golf, a subject that probably could have gone on long into the night if allowed. John Grindrod, of Econoplas, was next who talked about recycled products useful to the Golf Industry. The day was rounded off by David Stansfield who gave us a very interesting presentation on some of the course renovation, general revamping and upgrading projects he has been involved with on courses in the UK and Europe

In conclusion after questions time, the Chairman thanked everybody for their participation on the day, and expressed the Region's thanks to the Sponsors of the Seminar, listed below, who as always were most generous with their support.

The South East Region Seminar 2006 Sponsors were, Aitkens, Barenburg, Collier Turf Care, Headland, Lely UK, Rigby Taylor, Scotts, Sheriff Amenity, Tacit, Tower Chemicals.

Clive Osgood, Regional Administrator

## Surrey

Sunday, November 5. Bonfire night. The ghost of Guy Fawkes is wandering the dark cellars beneath the Houses of Parliament. He has found the stash of gunpowder he and his fellow conspirators placed there several hundred years ago. Up above in the main chamber a security guard is smoking a cigarette while leaning against a no smoking sign, completely unaware that far below a ghost has, since 1605, year after year, mislaid his tinder box and would have given a whole week's wages for a loan of the guard's box of matches.

So much for history, back to the present and our boys have once again donned their football kit, kindly sponsored by ETT, and taken to the field of battle on home ground at Colliers Wood. John Jennings and Adam Watt were the scoring stars in the 2-1 victory against the London Section. John Ross, our Section Secretary, was, I am reliably informed, dressed to kill in a pair of shorts that only just covered his ref's whistle.

You have probably realised that I was not present at the aforementioned football match for I was on holiday in Canada. The Rocky Mountains were spectacular and the Rocky Mountaineer train journey through them awe inspiring. They had a poem writing competition on the train and the winner was awarded the Order of the Salmon. As this is a slow news month, here's my entry, entitled Boys' Weekend Away.

I thought I'd swim up from the sea, yes me a handsome he-fish I'm swimming up with other guys, and we're looking for some she-fish. We're going back for old times, sake, the journey is worth doing when we arrive and meet the gals it's time to start a-wooing I'll flick my tail and flash my gills to show I'm in condition, so line up chicks, it's time for love, the end of my sex mission.

But now I lie upon my back, my hold on life is loose when I come back in my next life, my choice - you've guessed - A MOOSE.

So much for love in the river, here's love on dry land. Nigel Morris, Deputy at Epsom GC, married Emma on October 21 at Gatton Manor Hotel and Golf Club. Their daughter Jodie was Bridesmaid. Congratulations and best wishes to you three.

After Canada we flew to Hawaii, one of a group of islands in the North Pacific discovered by Capt, Cook in 1778. Geography and history in one sentence. I only mention this because I survived the 2006 earthquake in Hawaii. The full story when next we meet.

Brian Willmott

Order of the Salmon.

Email [brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk)

## Kent

Welcome to another fun packed edition of your Kent news.

A couple of people moving on to tell you about first of all. Two of my guys at Birchwood Park have decided to move on to pastures new. Richard Burgess has taken up the vacant Deputy Course Manager's role at West Hove GC in Sussex and Gary Jessop has moved down the road to further his training at The London Club. Best wishes to both of them in their new positions.

Our monthly winter seminars are in full swing now at Hadlow College and the next one is on December 12 between 10am and 4pm. The topic for this one will be "Pre-Stress Management of Turf" which shall deal with how to manage your swards effectively when heading for the inevitable droughts. These sessions are completely free of charge and anyone from any Section is more than welcome to attend.

Not much else to tell you about this month other than to tell you that in next month's report there will be news on our AGM and Turkey Trot results. Also who came out triumphant in our long awaited football re-match with Sussex Section.

Merry Christmas one and all.

Rob Holland

## East Anglia

Our small, but perfectly formed band, (40ish) made our way to the City of Ely GC. Nice place, well kept by Andrew Baker and his men.

First we were warmly welcomed by a bacon roll and a cup of coffee, then off we strolled through the rough to battle out the prizes and silverware.

The overall winner was Norman Fenwick with 37 pts; 2. Chris O'Dowd, 35 pts; 3. Mark Henderson, 35 pts.

10-18 Section - 1. Glen Rayfield, 34 pts; 2. Ed Webster, 33 pts; 3. David Farmer, 32 pts. 19-28 Section - 1. David Driver, 35 pts; 2. Mick Lathrope, 27 pts; 3. Richard Mitchell, 27 pts - (two up and coming young men to look out for). G & T Section - 1. Mark Keysell, 37 pts; 2. Stuart Robson, 35 pts - (he knows all the George Formby songs and he's got a whippet!)

Mark Clements won the putting competition; Longest Driver was Ed Webster and Nearest the Pin was Stuart (Mr Banjo) Robson.

The loo seat was presented to Ian Willett for breaking two trolleys. They don't make them like they used to!

The main sponsors were Tomlinson Ground Care (complete with a dog wearing a John Deere cap) and John Deere.

Other sponsors are as follows: Aitkins; Atherton and Ellis; Bartram Mowers; Collier Turf Care; Consultant Clarkson; Headland Turf; Lely UK; Midlube; Rigby Taylor; Sheriff; Sisis; Tacit and Textron.

Thanks once again to the Club Captain, Martin Bright and all at the City of Ely Golf Club, for a smashing day out.

November 1 saw the South East Regional Seminar held at Thorpeness Country Club. Our very own Ian Willett is the Chairman and his first big event went very well with some excellent speakers taking part.

The proceedings were opened by John Pemberton, top brass from BIGGA, on 'The Way Forward for the Association', with obvious concerns about BTME.

This was followed by Ray Harding, the ecologist to the award winning Thorpeness GC, with very interesting views on achieving an area of co-habitation between golfers and wildlife - something we should all be striving for.

Then came Kate Entwistle, on turf diseases. Fusarium is no more! Well that's not quite true, they just changed the name to Constantinople.

After lunch Billy and Ian McMillan, who came in at the last moment, gave an interesting talk on drought and sustainable golf. Made you think a bit.

Now here is a challenge. Stand up and talk to a room of hardened greenkeepers about drainage. John Grindrod, of Econoplas, did it, recycling products to make drainage tiles for bunkers etc. Worth looking into.

David Stansfield rounded the day off with an agronomist's view of course renovation. Very interesting, ask Norman!

There were also some trade stands from our sponsors: Aitkens; Collier Turf Care; Tower Chemicals; Scotts; Rigby Taylor; Tacit; Barenburg; Sherriff (2f's); Headland and Lely UK; where you could have a friendly chat and put the world right.

Our thanks once again to Thorpeness Country Club for an excellent venue and hospitality and to Ian for his excellent organisation.

All those who took part deserve a pat on the back. There were a few empty seats but I'm sure they will all be at Harrogate to give the Association the support it needs in this current climate.

Mick Lathrope

**SOUTH WEST  
& SOUTH WALES**

**Harrogate Week 2007**

The South West and South Wales Region are once again offering members a three-night bed and breakfast package to Harrogate, staying at The Cairn Hotel, arriving on Monday, January 22, departing Thursday, January 25. The cost for this package to BIGGA members is: Single room, £216 per person; Twin room for single occupancy, £240 per person; Numbers are limited and places should be reserved before sending your booking form and payment.

The Region is also offering a package for the Educational Seminars taking place. Members can book all seven seminars at a cost of £105 - this being a total saving of 40%. This saving can only be obtained by booking through me. Should you wish to book individual seminars, this must be done through Sami Collins at Headquarters and the cost will be discounted on a scale according to the number booked.

All bookings both for accommodation and seminars, must be made and confirmed with payment by Friday, December 15.

Booking forms and details will be sent to Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers in October. Should anyone not receiving this information and wishing to book, please contact me on Tel: 01454 270850 or mobile: 07841 948110.

Jane Jones, Regional Administrator

**South West**

Scary to think that this comes out just before Christmas. The year has gone so quickly, so a huge thank-you to all our committee members who made it all work, and to all the clubs and greenkeepers who made our golf days so enjoyable and educational. Thanks once again also to our Patronage Partners - Messers MJ Abbott, Amenity Technology, BS Mowers, Bredy Irrigation, Tower Chemicals, Irritech, Rigby Taylor, Symbio, Rufford, Avoncrop Amenity, and Countrywide Farmers, your sponsorship has made the Section tick - most important. Remember, places at BTME are up for grabs as a result of this sponsorship - write to: Nobby Knight, 17 St Marys Gardens, Hilperton March, Trowbridge, Wilts, BA14 7PG, and let him know why you deserve the place and what you hope to gain from the experience.

A total of 42 members attended the AGM at Ogbourne St George in October. Yours truly had to give his apologies and hang his head in shame - so no full report this time, but grateful thanks to Nick Pusey and his team for presenting the course in such great order, and to Ogbourne for their hospitality. New for next year on our committee is an assistant secretary, Roger Neale, who will hopefully be able to help in keeping contact with everyone to improve attendances at Section events. Other changes are Wayne Vincent, as Match Captain, and Shaun Richards, as Vice Captain, and Robin Greaves co-opted on.

Back at Minch, the lake and irrigation system installation is in full swing. MJ Abbott have about 15 guys on site - cutting the trenches looks absolutely brutal, but the backfill team are so skilled and dedicated, that after a couple of weeks you can literally hardly see where they've been. So skilled in fact, that we've hardly lost a single member down any of the holes. Kevin Green's lake however is another matter, you can most certainly see where that is. 7850 cubic metres of rock coming out of it and being landscaped into mounds - you can see where they are as well. Our guys are doing the re-topsailing and seeding so plenty to do there. Getting quite good with a five tonne Takeuchi - only another 5000 cubes and the rest of my life to go. I'm certainly looking forward to the New Year, and switching on my new irrigation next June and seeing something actually work properly for a change. Incidentally, we have a good supply of used nearly-new Tonic Decoders, Logic impact drive sprinklers, and a TW2 with remote - if anyone is interested for spares, give me a shout. Fixtures will be out soon - dates for your 2007 diary so far are as follows, with special thanks to Roger Davey, Jon Jarvis, and Marc Haring for their ideas and offers.

At Stockwood Vale on February 22 is the winter competition and Roger Davey's lecture on Water use; At Cotswold Hills on April 25 is the spring tournament; At Enmore Park on May 17 is Greenkeeper Amateur; Race Night takes place in June - (date from Jon Jarvis); At Cumberwell Park on July 25 is the Summer Tournament and Marc Haring's quiz night; At Farrington Gurney on September 13 is a Match vs South Coast and at Minchinhampton New on October 11, the AGM will take place.

If anyone is interested in hosting a 2008 tournament, or has any local news for this column - please let me know. In the meantime, I'll close by wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Paul Worster  
paulw@mgnew.co.uk  
01453 837355.

**South Coast**

Congratulations to ME! At last, I am a Daddy. Rowan Charles Crawley came into this world on October 29, 2006 at 5.27am, weighing in at 8lbs 12oz. Mother and son are doing fine. We are overjoyed and may I say a big thank you to everyone who has been enquiring as to the event. Sorry it was a bit late (eight days overdue) but all very much worth it.

Our autumn tournament was held at Corhampton GC on Thursday, October 12. As usual, mother nature blessed us with a beautiful, dry day. Excellent conditions for a day's golf. The course was in excellent condition and our gratitude goes to Mike Smith, the Course Manager, and his staff for their hard work in preparing the course for our Section. Thank you also to all the staff at Corhampton GC for making us feel very welcome, especially to the catering staff, providing well earned nourishment. As usual, huge appreciation to Rigby Taylor, our Sponsors for the day.

Results were as follows: 1.1 Alan Magee, 37 pts; 1.2 Bill Davis, 34 pts; 2.1 Chris Taplin, 43 pts; 2.2 Kevin Glass, 38 pts; 3.1 Phil Bennett, 39 pts, 3.2 David Miles, 37 pts; Longest Drive - Nick Reynolds and Nearest the Pin - Andy McDonald.

The AGM was held after the day's golf, and all went smoothly and to plan with no major issues. Once again, major tribute must be paid to your hardworking committee for their efforts during the year.

If you get your issue in time, the Turkey Trot, is at Weybrook Park GC on December 6. Please contact Chris Sturgess on: 02380 492084 Mob: 0777313 8409 - after 8pm for more details.

On the subject of Golf Days, I have next year's fixtures: Spring Tournament - Romsey GC - May 3, 2007; Summer Tournament - Andover GC - Tuesday, July 3 2007; Autumn Tournament - North Hants GC - October, 23 2007 and Winter Tournament - TBA.

The South West match will be at Farrington Gurney GC on September 13, 2007 and the Scotts/BIGGA will be held at Stoneham GC on May 31, 2007.



The South Coast Seminar, which Chris Bitten is organising, is taking shape and once again looks to be a fascinating and informative day. Details will soon be distributed to the membership. If you've not been to this event before, I strongly recommend attendance.

We would like to wish the very best to Spencer Haynes, who is leaving Hartley Wintney GC to go on to pastures new, maintaining peoples' lawns and passing on his great experience and knowledge to the domestic market. To both Spencer and his family, our very best wishes for the future and we hope to see you at future golf days.

Well that's it folks for this month. All I need to do now is to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. I am now off to go and change a nappy!

Joe Crawley

**Devon & Cornwall**

Well, our season of meetings has commenced for the 2006/2007 year, the first one was held at Launceston GC on Wednesday, October 11 - which was our AGM. As you will all know by now, at the request of HQ, we have been asked to bring our AGM forward a month compared with previous years. This has not really caused any problems other than the fact that a good many greenkeepers were still finishing their autumn maintenance programme work, which meant that our attendance was rather on the low side compared with past years, however, 45 members attended.

The day commenced with a golf competition sponsored by D O Hunt and Roffeys. The format was a Stableford and in spite of very heavy rain over night - nearly 50mm - the course was in fantastic condition thanks to all the hard work by Grame Gallimore, the Head Greenkeeper and his staff.

The winners were as follows: 1 - Chris Pearson, Newquay GC, 39pts (h/cap 3); 2 - Brian Ridgway, Fingle Glen GC, 36pts (h/cap 14); 3 - Gavin Moore, Launceston GC, 35pts (h/cap 12).

Having indulged in a superb lunch, the afternoon proceedings commenced with the AGM, followed by the prize presentation. We were all pleased to welcome Jane Jones, our Regional Administrator, and of course, our National Chairman, Richard Whyman. The meeting lasted 45 minutes and there were no problems. What really pleased me was that we had some very constructive questions and suggestions from members, which will be on the agenda for our next Section committee meeting, held at Trenthorpe GC in November.

At the request of our National Chairman - RE: Having younger members on the Section Committee - it was decided and approved to co-opt Abi Crosswood, from Newquay GC, onto the committee. I am sure you will have read about Abi in Greenkeeper International recently, she was runner-up in the Toro Student of the Year competition. Hopefully Abi will add some constructive ideas to our meetings.

I would like to take this opportunity to correct a mistake in this year's diary, the meeting at St Enodoc is to be held on Wednesday, March 14, 2007 - not Friday as printed.

Last but not least, the Christmas dinner will be at Okehampton GC on Tuesday, December 12, you all know it is very popular, so once you have received your form, please return post haste.

See you all soon and good luck.

Donovan O Hunt  
Administrator

**CHECK OUT THE EVENTS PAGE ON THE BIGGA WEBSITE FOR AN UP TO DATE LIST OF ALL THE HAPPENINGS IN YOUR SECTION AND REGION.**

*From Tournaments to Seminars, AGM's to Dinners it's all covered at [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk).*

**If you have a BIGGA event that you wish to place on the Events Page contact Melissa at BIGGA HOUSE on [melissa@bigga.co.uk](mailto:melissa@bigga.co.uk) or 01347 833800**

**SECTION NOTES INFORMATION**

In order to improve the sending and receiving of Section Notes, where possible can all future notes be emailed to [melissa@bigga.co.uk](mailto:melissa@bigga.co.uk) by no later than the 5th of the month prior to publication please.

*Word limit 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 HQ.

**In the Shed ANSWERS**

**CROSSWORD**

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**ANAGRAM**

DEMONS JAB  
ANSWER: James Bond

**SPOT THE DIFFERENCE**



**A QUICK NINE HOLES**

1. Saturn
2. Andy Cole
3. Ouse
4. Raymond Floyd
5. Klaxon
6. Liam Plunkett
7. Lawrence Dallaglio
8. Rosie
9. Sumo Wrestling