



News from the Chief Executive

Welcome to our new Chairman, Richard Whyman, and his Vice Chairman, Billy McMillan and I look forward to working with them. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Andy Campbell MG, who leaves the Board as Immediate Past Chairman, for his relentless energy and enthusiasm and wish him every success in his new job with the Old Course Hotel in St. Andrews.

Thanks are also due to George Barr, who is replaced on the Board by Raymond Day as the representative for the South East Region. Kerran has been an inspiration to us all with his column and I am sure that he has thrown down a difficult challenge for Richard to beat!

With over 7,000 visitors representing 31 countries there is no doubting that Harrogate Week placed BIGGA well and truly on the international scene. The event is firmly placed in the diary of those involved in either turf management or the administration of golf and many of the delegates took advantage of the diverse package of education available. Despite the perception of Harrogate being buried somewhere in North Yorkshire it still proves to be a popular venue and provides a perfect focal point for the industry.

Thankfully gone are the days of Harrogate being seen as an excuse for a trip away from home or work when the chance to have a drink (or two) was foremost in some visitor's thoughts. Last week I was proud to be associated with an industry, whose representatives and members conducted themselves and their business in a very professional manner.

The success of the week very much depends upon the support of the members and their colleagues, members or not, and I hope that many have taken inspiration from Harrogate Week 2006 and will make a determined effort to attend the event in January 2007. It is a matter of fact that due to budgetary constraints certain major companies have chosen not to exhibit in 2007 however plans are already underway at HQ for an expansion of the education while the actual configuration of the exhibition halls will be decided after the booking deadline of February 28.

I have received unprecedented support for the future from both exhibitors and visitors and together we can make Harrogate Week 2007 an event to beat all others. It was particularly heartening to see the major organisations in the golf industry working together and I intend building on this for next year.

With the prospect of spring around the corner then I and the rest of the management team at HQ will be looking at Regional and Section fixtures with a view to making visits and meeting members. I hope to renew some old acquaintances as well as make new ones and hope that members take the opportunity to support their Section.

All too often members are quick to criticise their local committee but slow to get involved themselves. Please do not be afraid to come forward and offer a little bit of help, even if on a casual basis.

Finally, for the benefit of those of you who read my column last month I can confirm that I have rejoined a club, but I have yet to tell my wife. Maybe some flowers on Valentine's Day will soften the blow!

John Pemberton



ANNUAL SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2006 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline on Tuesday March 7.

This year's speakers include Ian Tomlinson, Course Manager from Rungstead Golf Club in Denmark, Richard Windows, Agronomist with the STRI in Scotland, and Euan Grant, Course Manager, Old Course St. Andrews. Other speakers include Dr Colin Fleming, Research Scientist Queens' University Belfast, Ann Murray, of the European Turf Laboratory Stirling, and finally David Snowden, European Technical Director Floratine Products.

Cost of the ticket is £32, which includes Tea/Coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms have been posted to all members and further forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J. Boyd, Regional Administrator on Tel/ Fax: 0141 616 3440 and e-mail at pj.boyd@btinternet.com.

East

A club very much in the news this month is Berwick Golf Club, known to many of you as 'Goswick'. During October 2000 the club commenced a major reconstruction of the course, with all works carried out in house by the Course Manager, George Thompson, and his team. Assisted by three part time labourers during the months of October to March the works were finally completed in 2004. The end result, which is a credit to all involved, includes four new greens, seven new championship tees, three realigned fairways and numerous new bunkers.

All materials used were sourced from the course, creating drainage ponds and wetlands areas, which are a great draw for wildlife. The prize for all their hard work arrived just before Christmas, with the announcement that Goswick has been appointed as a regional qualifier for the British Open from 2008 - 2012.

The recipients of the Patrons Awards this year were Ryan McCulloch, of Berwick Golf Club (in the news yet again), and Stuart Crawford, of North Berwick West, who each received a free trip to Harrogate Week. Hopefully their respective Course Managers will now benefit from this trip now they have returned.

During December I had a discussion with Tom Murray, Course Manager at Ratho Park. Tom is heavily involved with the Scottish Environment Group (SGEG for short), who runs a Golf Bag holder scheme. This scheme involves a number of key people of whom Tom is one, keeping a library of books and ideas on environmental issues. Areas covered include information on pond construction, tree planting and creating wetland areas. This information is available for use by all greenkeepers currently in training or others looking to improve their course's environmental potential. For further information Tom can be contacted by email on t.d.murray@blueyonder.co.uk or by telephone on 07709 960163 or a full list of Bag Holders in the east area can contact Elspeth Coutts at Elspeth.coutts@sgeg.org.uk.

Finally, belated congratulations to Ian Kinlay, Head Greenkeeper at The Glen Golf Club, for being included in the BIGGA Delegation of 10, which is Atlanta bound in February to take in the GCSAA Golf Industry Show courtesy of Bernhard & Co. Hopefully on his return Ian can be persuaded to write a few lines on his trip for this column.

Until next month
Mike Dooner

North

New members to the North Section this month are Dane Macpherson, Trainee Greenkeeper, Spey Valley GC; Andrew Aitken, Greenkeeper, Spey Valley GC; Barry Campbell, Greenkeeper, Spey Valley GC. Spey Valley Golf Club is the new course in Aviemore, which is attached to the Macdonald Hotel Group. They are working under Bob Mackay, who is the Course Manager.

Robert Patterson

West

Welcome to this month's report. I hope everyone has had an enjoyable Christmas and all the best for 2006. During November we held our annual night out at the Studio in Glasgow. There were approximately 45 in attendance, once again it was a

great night with plenty of entertainment, that was just from the members, and the comedian was good as well.

The only problem was that it was a Saturday night and a few of the boys weren't allowed out, so I think next year we will revert back to a Friday. If anyone would like to see a change of venue please get in touch, as we are always open to discussion.

I attended the Patrons' Award Dinner during December, at the Terraces Hotel in Stirling, which once again was a first class venue. The speaker on the day was John McElvie, who is a former colleague of Peter's in the constabulary. He gave us a first class turn. Many thanks John on behalf of the Association. Also thanks to Peter for arranging the dinner and for his hard work beforehand, and to the Terraces' staff for their attentiveness and making us very welcome.

I would like to congratulate the Patron Award winners from the West Section, who are John Barr, Ranfurly Castle, and Colin Scott, from Glasgow Golf Club. Many thanks for all you have done for your Section over the past year.

We have a new Committee member in the Section - John Barr, from Ranfurly Castle. John has agreed to come on and do a stint after many hours persuasion in the Wallace Bar Renfrew. I know John will do a great job and we look forward to seeing him at his first meeting in February.

Other Committee news - John Robertson, Hilton Park GC, stepped down at the last AGM. John was the Education Convenor for many years and did a first class job. On behalf of the Committee and myself I would like to thank you very much for your efforts and all the best for the future.

The fixture list for 2006 will be sent out over the next month informing all members of events planned, also seminars and golf outings for the year ahead. Once again Richard Aitkin has kindly sponsored the fixture card.

On a sad note, I announce the passing of Joe McKean, a long time member of the Section, who was also a past Secretary of SIGGA. Joe was a member at Hags Castle Golf Club and will be sadly missed. Our thoughts go to his family and friends at this sad time.

During spring/early summer we hope to arrange an open day with the Fairways Group. Times and venue will be printed as soon as possible. With a wide range of their products on show, including Textron, Iseki, etc.

The Scottish Conference will once again be held at Larder College, Dunfermline, on March 7. There will be a wide range of speakers on the day, so if you haven't yet booked then do so now.

A happy New Year to all the Drimsynie die hards. We held our autumn outing during October. The winner on the day was Robert Bruce with Davy, the local chef, finishing second. It was a fantastic day, apart from the heavy rain at the end. I would like to thank Bryce Houston, the President of the die hards, for arranging the day's festivities. We look forward to returning in March for our spring outing. Hopefully we will be back to full numbers.

Any news, etc. please get in touch on 07970 366 355.

Fraser Ross

NORTHERN REGION

North West

I hope you all enjoyed Harrogate Week and took in a few of the seminars. I thought the education side of the Week was superb, so congratulations and well done to everyone involved in making Harrogate the only place to be.

Fixture lists are going to be sent out to everyone in the North West Section this year. Here is a little taster of what is to come in 2006.

North Wales Section Seminar, Carden Park, February 21; Spring Tournament, West Lancashire GC, April 20; Summer Tournament, Morecambe GC, June 15; The Autumn Tournament will be at St Annes Old Golf Club, date TBA.

As always, to play in the spring, summer or autumn tournaments you must send a cheque for £20, payable to BIGGA North West Section. The address to send your cheque to is Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU.

Please don't leave it until the last minute to book your place, as the golf club caterers need to be informed in plenty of time and Billy gives everyone a hard time. If anyone has any news or just needs a little bit of advice, please contact the

Secretary, Bert Cross, on 0151 7245412 or myself on 0151 2894625. If you are on the World Wide Web my email address is jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk.

Chris Sheehan

Northern

Apologies to my regular readers who will have noticed that my column was missing last month. I admit that I missed the last post, so to speak. However, albeit rather belatedly, I have a number of pieces of news for you now.

On October 5 we were privileged guests of Woolley Park Golf Club for our Autumn Tournament and AGM. Sadly it was again a poor turnout. The results on the day were as follows.

Division 1. 1. Andy Slingsby; 2. Dave Collins; 3. Rob Gee. Division 2. 1. Stuart Mason; 2. Keith Grey; 3. Adam Speight. Division 3. 1. Jo Baxter; 2. David Heaton; 3. Andy Scaman. Trade. 1. Ian Collett; 2. Gary Potter.

Our thanks to Phil Rowbotham and his staff for producing a fantastic golf course, and to all the clubhouse staff for a superb meal.

December 10 was the date for Christmas Golf and 'Night Out!' Luckily, this year I'm not aware of anybody being arrested. Although I have heard that a member of the Crow Nest staff felt, shall we say, "a little unwell" in a Halifax drinking establishment and was sent home in disgrace.

I won't say whom it was, but suffice to say it wasn't Rob or Damian! I'll bring you the results next month, when hopefully I'll have located the scores, but if I remember correctly it was Team Mike Brear who walked away with the champagne. Again, a big thank you to Martin Heggy, Jo, Paul and everybody else at Bradford Moor Golf Club for what everyone agrees was a great day.

Adam Speight

Cleveland

Well Harrogate Week has come and gone and I hope things have gone as well as usual. I'm sure a lot of BIGGA members supported the BTME Exhibition. Things are very quiet and there is little to report. I'm led to believe that the mild, moist weather has resulted in a lot of fungal attacks recently. Bad news for the greenkeeping fraternity, but great for the chemical salesmen! It's an ill wind, eh boys!

I heard a nice little story the other day about three men in the pub for a little drink. One was from Glasgow, one from Dublin and the third from the Boro. They spot Jesus sitting at the bar and get the waiter to give him three drinks. The Jock sends a double whisky, the Mick sends a Guinness and the Smoggie supplies a pint of lager. After he'd finished the drinks Jesus walks over to the trio to thank them.

Firstly he shakes the Dublin boy's hand and the Irishman shouts "A miracle, a miracle my arthritis has been cured!" Jesus then shakes the Glaswegian's hand and the Jock exclaims "A miracle, a miracle my bad back has been cured!" As Jesus approaches the Boro boy, the Smoggie pulls away and shouts "Beggar off Jesus, I'm on disability!"

Not much good news on the football scene with the three Premier teams and the Pools doing badly. Darlo have put a good run together - hope they can keep it up.

Don't forget - Barry Walker's quiz at Teesside Golf Club is Wednesday February 8, commencing at 7.30pm. Any news to me on 07831 214879.

Terry Charlton

Sheffield

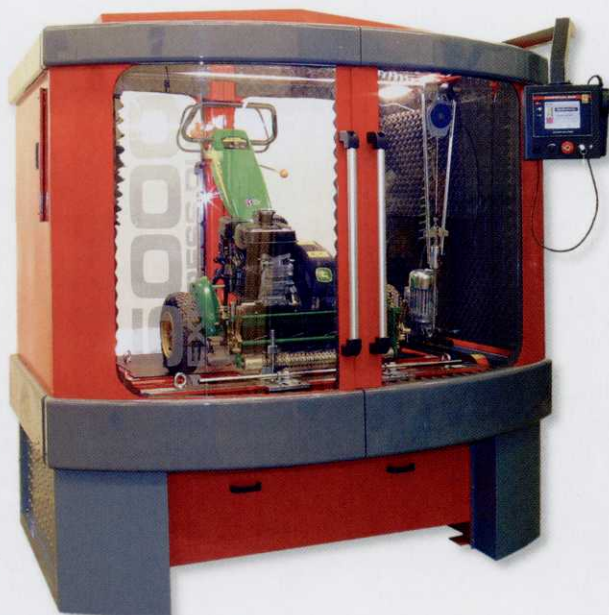
On December 12 we held our Christmas Competition, sponsored by Rigby Taylor, at Rotherham Golf Club. On behalf of the Section I would like to thank the club for giving the courtesy of their course once again. Thanks also go to the bar and catering staff for providing an enjoyable meal and excellent service.

On the golf side of things it was a lovely golfing day for December, sometimes a bit to sunny when playing holes into the sun! Rotherham was in great condition. Well done to Dave Chappell and his staff for doing an excellent job. Thanks go to Mike Brear, from Rigby Taylor, for sponsoring the event once again and to all other trade members who provided prizes. This year everybody who played got a prize to go home with! There was some excellent golf played and the eventual winner, with 27pts from 12 holes, was Joel France. Well played Joel!

Results: 1. J. France, 27pts; 2. D. Chappell, 26pts; 3. R. Jones, 25pts; 4. G. Brittan, 25pts; 5. S. Currie, 25pts. Well played everyone! Guest winner was Mike Brear. Well played Mike!

After the golf we held our AGM and with a good attendance it ran fairly smoothly. There was one change to our Committee with Colin Hoppe standing

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down. Thanks for all the work you did Colin. Kevin Kelsall was elected on to take his place. Gordon Brammah is trying to get a library running in the Section, but we want to know if anyone out there needs any books for study or reference. If so, the Section may be able to buy them and then add them to the library! If this is so, please feel free to contact Gordon on 07814 043220 or 0114 2308469 to discuss things further.

Last piece of news this month, and it is quite a big piece. On March 23 we have arranged a lecture to be given by Peter Allis. After a lot of hard work Gordon has persuaded him to give us a talk, which will be held at Rotherham Golf Club once again. You should be receiving or have received details of this event in the post, this will be a very popular day.

Any news please contact me as usual on 07793111845 or jv.lax@tesco.net
John Lax

MIDLAND REGION

East Midlands

Last year's Christmas Tournament was graced with one of football's all time greats, Gary McAllister. He is a golf club colleague of myself and has a CV that reads as follows: Motherwell FC 1980; Leicester City 1985; Leeds 1990 (league champions in 91 & 92); Coventry 1996; Liverpool 2000 and a winner of five trophies that include a League Cup, FA Cup, UEFA and UEFA Super Cup and a Charity Shield; plus a short spell as Player Manager at Coventry. Gary gave a thrilling hour long Question and Answer session at Charnwood Forest Golf Club after the Christmas Tournament.

Gary answered questions of all types ranging from missed penalties to life as a manager as well as plenty of footballing stories. Gary very generously gave his time for free but asked that we make a donation of £250 to our local Rainbows Hospice, which cares for terminally ill children.

In recognition for what he did we also made him a Trade and Associate member of the Association and hope to see him at some future events. We also asked him to wear the BIGGA tie when he is working on the TV for Sky - so watch very carefully!

We trust he had a good day because he also won the Trade and Associate prize with a magnificent 34 points on a cold and very windy day beating Simon Hedley on 30 points and David Smith with 27.

Other results in the 0-14 category were Andy Marsh, 39; Nigel Colley, 34; and Keith Smith, with 32. In the 15-28 category Craig Watt won with a fantastic 46 points from Frazer Harrison, 35, and Ross McCarthy, 31pts.

Thanks to everybody, particularly Head Greenkeeper, Tim Allard, who made the day so successful and to Rigby Taylor for their sponsorship.

Richard Barker

Midland

Our Christmas event was held at the wonderful Links Formby GC on December 2. Our thanks to the club for affording us such a sumptuous venue at so prestigious a course. The course was presented to a standard which can only be aspired to. Such being achieved by Derek Pothsthaite and his obviously excellent greenkeeping team. Our greatest of thanks to you all.

The results of the day were: 1. D. Fellows & D. Clewes; 2. A. Cornes & R. Thomas; 3. M. Gash & R. Thwaites; 4. J. Ganley & P. McCrainor. Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin went to L. Swann & M. Hughes respectively. Thanks to M. Chamberlain, Tacit, for the once again excellent prize table.

As you may or may not know I have never really been a football fan (I can hear it now - "ponce"). So imagine my surprise when I received a phone call from Steve Bruce asking why their number one fan's wife was accompanying their sons (Nick, Andy and Richard) to home matches. He did say that Karen was perhaps a little more pleasing to the eye. Seriously though, V. Lee, Course Manager, Great Barr, has been through the mill health wise this year. Just to let you know that we are all thinking of you Vince and wishing you a speedy recovery so as you can enjoy your 40th on the 16. Happy Birthday mate.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome five new members to our Section. S. J. Harvey, A. Myau, J.D. Shaw, C. Woodall and I.S. Beech. I hope that you shall take

advantage of the many opportunities our Section provides its members. All please remember that the events provided, whether they be purely educational, a combination of pleasure and the afore said, or simply useful (Midland Section Calendar). Such takes a huge amount of organisation and effort from all of your Committee, and such is done so only to serve the members of our fine Section. Please support our events, without such we are all wasting opportunities and further advancement!

With the above in mind, the educational visit to the JCB factory in Uttoxeter is planned for the April 5. If interested, please call Rhys: 07775 581615.

It is with the greatest of sadness that it falls upon me to have to report that A. Southam, Hanson Aggregates, has passed away. Allen was a great supporter of our Section for many years, and indeed (on a personal note) he was more than instrumental in the start of our Section's annual angling match. Indeed, the standards for the event were set by Allen. Our deepest of sympathies to Allen's wife, family, and friends. You shall be sorely missed, Sir.

Congratulations to P. Adams, Deputy at Shirley, and lovely wife, Sam, on the arrival of their baby girl, Liley mae, in December. The chaps at Shirley are "well made up for you both". Maybe a future greenkeeper or have you both more sense!

On February 22 K. Booth, Assistant Greenkeeper, Stourbridge GC, shall embark on a charity walk from Kidderminster to Tal-y-bont in Wales, some 106 miles. This being to raise funds for Cancer Research at St Richard's hospice in Worcester, and also to honour Kevin's late father Michael Booth, who tragically passed away last year at the young age of 58. Anyone wishing to sponsor this most important charity via Kevin's walk please contact me on: 07908 421015. I certainly shall be doing so to the tune of £10. Come on follow suit, and I don't mean hearts. Greenkeepers don't walk, just ask any member!

Finally, just time to congratulate A. Jones on his new position as Deputy at Penn GC. Must be something about Penn, I went there from Austria, and Adam goes there from Sweden. Obviously the challenge of a different language (bin and bae, think about it) draws one.

Sean McDade

BB&O

The horse racing, golf playing residents of Ascot and Bagshot must number among the luckiest folk in England for right on their doorstep lie two breathtaking eighteen hole golf courses. The Berkshire, the Red and the Blue, were designed in 1928 by Herbert Fowler - a master among golf architects - whose other great works include Walton Heath and Saunton in Devon. The Red and Blue courses occupy some 400 acres of Crown land over which Queen Ann's carriage used to pass en route to hunting in Swinley Forest. This was the venue for the BB&O Turkey Trot and Annual General Meeting held on a bright but chilly December morning.

The format for the day was a shotgun start with 72 players eagerly awaiting the delights of the Red Course comprising of an unusual six par three's, six par four's and six par five's and famed for its glorious tree lined fairways. A splendid mix of mature pines, chestnuts and silver birch provided the setting for a truly challenging event where the rough consisting of heather ensured that the wayward hitter was heavily punished.

After a few Dennis Wise Putts, "nasty litter five footer", and many Son in Law Shots, "not quite what I had in mind", a fantastic day's golf was had by all. A sumptuous carvery followed with the finest roast beef and turkey on the menu cooked and served to perfection by the attentive and helpful catering staff that made us all welcome throughout the day. Sincere thanks to our hosts, The Berkshire, Secretary Lt. Col. John Hunt and Chris Lomas and his green staff for preparing the course to a first class standard and accommodating our every need at the AGM.

The results were as follows: 1. David Rowland, with local knowledge from The Berkshire GC, 40pts; 2. Alistair Higgs, The Blue Mountain Man, 38pts; 3. Matt Weatherstone, count back. Nearest the Pin was Ray Tapper, from Burnham Beeches GC, and J. Snyman, with a monster hit securing, The Longest Drive. The winner of the trade prize went to yours truly, with 34 points, after narrowly beating Clive Parnell, from GEM Professional.

Thank you to Joe Crawley and Barry MacCluskie, from Avoncrop, for sponsoring this year's Turkey Trot and providing for the first time The Avoncrop Cup, to be presented every year to the winner of the event.

Section Chairman, Sid Arrowsmith, presented Christian Doyle and Brian Payne, from Burnham Beeches GC, with the BB&O Shield. They were the deserving winners of the Autumn Invitational, held at Oxford City GC, in August 2005.

The New Claret Jug, sponsored by JE Ely, for Golfer of the Year was presented by Mark Ely and Sid Arrowsmith. This went to none other than Carl Small, from Ellesborough GC. Truly a living legend amongst the disabled.

Thank you to all our sponsors throughout the year. We all have had great time and continuous support from the trade, which have included Scotts, Avoncrop, Tacit, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Turner Groundcare, JE Ely, Gem Professional, European Turf Technology. I have not forgotten the scorecard man, good old T.H. White. Congratulations to Simon Banks, from Banks Amenity, who has joined the first time dad club with a baby girl.

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), Alistair Higgs (Handicap Secretary). Frank Booth, Gareth Acteson and new comers Bill Paterson and Dan Lightfoot are the General Committee members. Not forgetting yours truly as the scribe for another year.

Lets see what the New Year has to offer and wishing you lots of luck and a fantastic year ahead in the Chinese Year of the Dog.

Mark Day

Mid Anglia

The Christmas Texas scramble event, which is always very popular, was this year held at Dunstable Downs Golf Club. 98 players turned out for a great day's golf resulting in some excellent scores. All the teams wanted to shake Gary Boulton's hand for his pin positions on the day and some wanted to shake him by another part of his anatomy! Sorry Gary, they made me write that.

Big thanks go out to Course Manager, Frank Scullion, and his team, all the catering and bar staff for providing an excellent meal and friendly service. The day was sponsored by Avoncrop and these are the results.

1. D. Housden, T. Dealey, A. Henderson and R. Housden; 2. A. Barker, D. Charlton, S. Kelly and R. Osbourne; 3. D. Hodkin, B. Brown, M. Fance and M. Rees. Longest Drive. Alan Grew.

The day was also time to present the bandit, sorry, Player of the Year Award. This was sponsored by Turner Groundcare and this year it deservedly went to Richard Saunders. A special presentation was also made to Geoff Smith, who recently retired from his post at Veralum Golf Club after many years of service. We wish him well in his retirement.

That's about it for this month, look out for 2006's events in the next issue.

Bob Butfoy

SOUTH EAST

Surrey

The following is from my November 2005 Around the Green report that was mislaid. It began with an opening paragraph relating to the number of marriages, births and job moves. A quiet month. Hence none. It then went on to thank all those readers who had contributed to my Italian holiday fund. Again none. So the following is a précis of the rest of my November offering.

The autumn tournament did take place on September 21 at West Surrey GC and I am informed that the event was very well supported by some 55 golfers, that the course was excellent, the meal a culinary delight. The sponsor was Rigby Taylor. I mention the sponsor's name early in my report because I did receive a complaint from one of our previous sponsors, who supplied the prizes for the McMillan Tankard at Sunningdale GC, namely Grass Roots. Jim Russell, a spokesman for the company and, I understand, one of their more senior managers, did point out to me, in rather colourful language, that I had omitted their name from the Sunningdale report. I apologise for my mistake and promise you Jim that when we next meet as some recompense, I will be delighted to accept any alcoholic drink of your choice.

The autumn tournament results were: 1. Garry Rowe, 44pts; 2. Mark Raisbeck, 40pts. 3. Derek Cunliffe, 39pts. Longest Drive. Gavin Kyle. Nearest Pin. Greg Smith. The hidden pairs prize. Garry Rowe and Gavin Kyle. The snappiest dresser prize. John Ross, whose flame red shirt deserved all the comments it got. Please remember that this information is not first hand but does come from a reliable source. Name and address available in a brown envelope for a small administration fee.



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Peter Larter
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The other big event that took place in September was the last test match against the Australians; the prize, the Ashes. As mentioned earlier, I was holidaying on a remote island in the bay of Naples. With very limited news from the outside world I resorted to texting somebody in England for the result. I chose Ron Christie, an unbiased Scotsman, who informed me that England's batting had collapsed and that Australia had batted well and had retained the Ashes.

I only realised the truth when we boarded the plane at Naples and sat next to a young man. He, by coincidence, was an Australian and sat crying in his lunch and did not seem over keen on discussing the real outcome of the match and England's glorious victory.

Up to date news now follows with our colourful Secretary, John Ross, wanting to bear from all you would be Rooneys end Beckhams to play football against a PGA team. Please contact John on mobile, 0798 6584304 or email jr003q6640@blueyonder.co.uk.

Job moves in Surrey include Eric Kinlon's appointment as Deputy Course Manager at Richmond GC and also joining the team at Richmond is Dan Norsworthy. Spencer Hawkins has moved from North Hants GC and is now Course Manager at Oak Park GC at Crondall.

Our programme of events in 2006 will be available soon and remember that I need your news to help remove my usual waffle from your Section's monthly Around The Green.

Brian Willmott

Kent

Hi everyone and welcome to a much shortened version of Kent Section news. It appears that nobody had any news to report for this column so all I have for you this month is to remind you about a big day for us on February 7.

Firstly, our final seminar will commence at 10am at Hadlow College. These days have been really good and well supported, so thanks to everyone who has attended and I hope you gained plenty out of them. This seminar is to be followed by a Night Golf event straight afterwards at Birchwood Park.

For anyone who hasn't experienced night golf before I can assure you that this is great fun and I hope as many of you as possible can make it.

I hope the New Year has started well for everybody and best wishes for the coming season.

Rob Holland

London

I know what you are thinking. When I read this, I probably will not believe it too. Yes, finally the London Section has something in Around the Green. It has been a while but due to my predecessor getting a new job at a great golf club things have been a little quiet. My congratulations to Alec MacIndoe on his move to Newbury and Crookham GC. Thanks for all your hard work on the Committee and for doing the Around the Green reports.

The London Section had its Turkey Trot at Porters Park Golf Club on Wednesday December 7. The course was in marvellous condition, it felt like summer until I realised I was frozen to the spot while looking at the great views. Martin Smith and his team must have worked so hard, as I did not see a leaf on the tree lined course. The food was fantastic and the bar staff were always happy to help.

The prizes went to the following. 1st place was the team from Northwood. In 2nd place it was Crews Mill 2 and in 3rd place, again, Crews Hill 1. Rob must be giving

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his guys lessons! My thanks go to Mick Fance, from Scotts, for sponsoring the day and thanks to the other companies who donated prizes. My thanks on behalf of those who played to Porters Park Golf Club for an excellent day.

The AGM was held after the meal. The AGM went very quick with two Committee members stepping down Alec MacIndoe, who I thanked earlier, and Paul Clark, who has been Secretary for the last four years. Paul has done a great job and I would like to thank him for all his hard work. We do appreciate it. Replacing Paul is Aaron Percival. I'm sure Aaron will do a great job.

The next Committee member to join our Section is Tony Dyke, from Wyke Green, who is a great bloke and will do a great job! Once again, Rob and Peter Phillips are staying on with David Badham and Jamie Lomas. Thanks again to them.

Lee Cox, Course Manager from Mill Hill, and I will try to write something in Around the Green for the London Section every month. We will try to keep you up to date with events, so we can see some more faces at events! In addition, we would invite you to get in touch to inform us of any news or ideas you would like to see included in this section. Tel: 0781 8410333.

Matt Plested

East Anglia

How long have we been going to Thorpeness in the winter? Yonks, and every year we see an improvement. As Boyce would say 'It just gets better and better, don't it?' Preparing a course in the summer is a piece of ---- compared to winter. Well done to Ian and the crew.

On December 14 112 people played in the Turkey Trot Texas Scramble. Shotgun start 9am and we were all sitting down just after 2.30pm ready for our Christmas dinner. Who said miracles only happen on the 25th? We have got more than a few prizes to go through along with their invaluable sponsors, so pay attention, I'll be asking questions at the end.

The 1st team and winners of the CMW prize were the Royals, David Hawkins, Robert Whiting, Stuart Plummer and Roger Plummer; 2. Stowmarket, James Gill, Matt Gill, Richard Burl and Wayne Thrower; 3. Thorpeness A Team, names withheld. Nearest the Pin, of which there are several. 2nd, sponsored by Aitkens, Richard Mitchell; 7th, sponsored by Tomlinson Groundcare, Robert Ransome; 10th, sponsored by Bartram Mowers, Roger Plummer; 16th, sponsored by Ben Burgess, Dominique or Dominic O'Brien; Nearest the Pin in 2 on the 6th, sponsored by Prime Irrigation, Stuart Edge; Nearest the Rope on the 1st, sponsored by Tacit, Brian Richardson, retired.

Longest Drive on the 4th, 0-15 handicap, sponsored by Lely UK, John Howard; Longest Drive on the 18th, 16-28 handicap, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, Stuart Patterson; The Longest Drive in the simulator, sponsored by Mick Fance of Scotts, Robert Whiting. Your question is, who is the retired man on the rope? Correct.

Moving swiftly on... The President's prize went to Robert Ransome, for maintaining a superb course on a shoestring budget or putting it another way, making a silk purse from a pig's ear (it can be done). The Clarkson Cup goes to Suffolk, Aldeburgh to be precise. Edward did have something to say (4mins 25 secs). The drift was more teams would be welcome next year. Thorpeness, Ufford Park and Eaton won environmental awards in 2005.

The prizes were presented by Stewart Robson, Thorpeness Captain. The Club Director, Tim Rowan-Robinson made a very welcoming speech, which was greatly appreciated by all. We also had BIGGA's top brass, Kerran Daly, who was very complimentary about our Section.

Bob Chesham bought a new driver, it cost him £14.99. He was dead chuffed because it went further than Brian Richardson's (retired) what cost him 100 smackers. A John Deere 'tractor' was auctioned and raised £60 for McMillan Nurses and the Section made £350 profit for the year.

Then came the AGM. All went quite smoothly thanks to the tireless efforts of Ian, Steve and Martin. There were a couple of 'rumbles', the first one about start times - a phone call to Ian the night before by those who really want to know will sort that out and save Ian more work. The issue of slow play is also quite simple, especially when playing a Stableford, as we nearly always do.

Just say 'This is a par 3 and you have played 6 and we haven't reached the Ladies tee yet, Pick it up! Or 'Hurry up, my tax runs out at the end of the month' - subtle hints like that. Seriously though, all these rumbles should be sorted out prior to an AGM, then egg is avoided. Then again perhaps you can do a better job, who knows?



Jane Jones
SOUTH WEST AND WALES
Tel: 01454 270850

The next AGM will be our 10th - time flies. Kerran Daly reckons we're the best. He also would like everyone to continue to support Harrogate Week, the trade and visitors alike.

Talking of trade, we must say a massive thank you to our lads who support us to the hilt. It's not always the amount that's put in, it's also the effort that goes with it. We really do appreciate everything, whether it's a golf ball or a gold watch. Our lads and lassies are as follows.

Symbio, Aitkens, Vitax, Amenitywise, Toro, Atherton & Ellis, Tomlinson Groundcare, Bartram Mowers, Textron, Ben Burgess, Tacit, CMW, Sisis, Collier Turfcare, Sherriff, Consultant Clarkson, Rigby Taylor, ETT, Scotts, Headland Turf, Prime Irrigation, Lely UK and Ransomes Jacobsen.

'Are we nearly there yet?' I hear you cry. Almost. Just to say a massive thank you once again to Thorpeness for yet another great day on a great course and marvellous hospitality. I hope you all had a good Christmas. See you all in this New Year. I think I'll go and have a lie down after all that.

Mick Lathrope

Essex

Nothing exciting to report this month apart from the fact we have had snow, hard frosts and sub-zero temperatures. This leaves me wondering why I set my alarm for 6 every morning and rush out of the front door to endure these wonderful weather conditions... It's all good fun!

As I write this report, my mind is formulating the attack plan for Harrogate. Will it be BTME, Wetherspoons, Pizza Hut, Lloyds, then you know where? Or will it be BTME, Lloyds, Kentucky Fried, Wetherspoons, followed by you know where? The choices are endless, but one thing is guaranteed... that morning after feeling! By the time this hits the press, it will all be over... I'll let you know how I got on.

If any of you avid readers have anything you wish to see in print - publishable that is - then do not hesitate to call me on 07963 310603.

Richard Williams



South West

Imagine the scene. It's 6am on January 2 2006 and I'm driving an open top sports car on the coast road between Cap D'Antibes and St. Tropez in the South of France. The sun reflects vividly and strongly from the surface of the sparkling blue Mediterranean Sea. Temperatures are hot enough outside the car, but even hotter inside, as with a gentle squirm the scantily clad female in the passenger seat nuzzles closer and closer.

She breathes my name, at first in a husky whisper and then for some inexplicable reason much louder, while digging me in the ribs, kicking my foot, and yelling "Paul, Paul, when the hell are you going to get up? That alarm's been ringing for the last five minutes". Yes, it's well before dawn on the first day back at work after the Christmas break, and I'm not quite ready to face it. I groan and send the wife downstairs to put the kettle on while I return to the South of France. Needless to say, it doesn't last long.

When I get back to work, I find that we've actually taken record green fees over the Christmas period, and there's quite a bit of work to do to straighten everything back out. Maybe not that surprising considering that the weather was either frosty or wet, and a couple of days frosty and wet at the same time. Never mind, the Treasurers happy, that makes the Secretary happy, and that means I'm off the hook for the time being.

At least I've shaken off the flu that I had all over the run-up to Christmas. "You office boys are always going down with something," said Mr Sympathy, Nobby Knight, grumpily on his mobile, with the wind howling away in the background. Actually I reckon I caught it by sitting on an open cab mini-digger for three days solidly, building a new 4th tee the week before, so there.

So apologies for missing the Landown Christmas Tournament event. I'm told that the course was scarcely recognisable from two years earlier, and it is without any hesitation that I award the prize for this year's Most Improved Course to Head Greenkeeper, Jon Jarvis. Many thanks Jon. It was a credit to you and your staff. By

the way, I may have dreamt up the bit about the prize.

Prizes were as follows. Division 1. 1. John Keenaghan, Chipping Sodbury, 39pts; 2. Ian Cornwall, Secretary, Lansdown, 37pts. Division 2. 1. Chris Sealey, Chippenham, 36pts; 2. Adrian Bennett, Kendleshire, 36pts (countback). Division 3. 1. Joe Turner, Textron, 39pts; 2. Jamie Acton, Weston Super Mare, 39pts (countback). Highest score on the first hole - it's that man again - Mike Harris with an unstoppable 16 strokes, including several out of bounds off the tee. Mike wins the scraper and de-icer, presumably so he can see where he's driving in future.

Many thanks to our Patronage Partners and all sponsors on the day for such an impressive prize table. The raffle, again sponsored by our Patronage Partners, raised £235 for the CLICK charity. This has been very gratefully received by the Trowbridge branch, with thanks to all members. Many thanks also to Lansdown Golf Club for the courtesy of the course, and the superb meal afterwards.

Keep the responses coming in to Marc Haring for the Educational Courses. These are not easily arranged, so take advantage while they're available. Again, thanks to our Patronage Partners for sponsorship.

Congratulations to Gary Hawley, of Filton Golf Club, who has been appointed Course Manager at Henbury. Gary, who was previously Deputy at Bristol & Clifton, had been in charge at Filton for six years and is really looking forward to a brand new challenge at Henbury. 2006 looks like being a year to remember for Gary - a new job, and his wife expecting their first child. Sleepless nights for more than one reason probably.

Must be fairly quiet elsewhere in the Region - at Minch, Kevin Green's company, Greenscape Imaginative Designs, are lined up to come back in to the Avening Course and move and reshape another 12 bunkers commencing February 16. We are also removing another 100 or so mature pine trees and replanting with beech. Five years ago I had almost 40 giant Leylandii cluttering up the Avening course, we're down to the last half dozen or so now, and counting.

I'm giving a PowerPoint Presentation to the public in Minchinhampton Town Hall in a month's time, about the virtues of golf and the environment. Considering the Old Course has been on most residents' hit lists for over 100 years, it should be quite an interesting evening. Apparently, trouble started in the early 1900s when the local vicar paid the butchers boy sixpence to sink empty meat tins into the Common so he could putt. A walker trod in one of the holes in the dark and turned his ankle. He went straight round and dug up the rectory lawn to teach the vicar a lesson, and so it goes on. I can hardly wait.

Wayne and the team at Cotswold Hills have completed relaying the second green, and are moving on to bunker improvements, reshaping the edges of another five. Forestry is also on his list with 100 odd trees scheduled for removal.

At Cirencester, Dave, Richard and the team are also busy on bunkers, both rebuilding and adding new ones - as a well-known member said having driven into a bunker, which hadn't been there the week before, "and a merry Christmas to you to". Dave is also overseeing some pretty impressive Cotswold stone wall rebuilding work at the main entrance to the club. There is an old water pumping station on the club's premises, and one end of an ancient arched stone viaduct. This runs under the main A435 road, built to take drainage water over a hundred years ago. Just another example of the historical interest and value of a golf course. Shows what great places we have.

Please drop me a mail with any other details of interesting works or features. It can't be just me Wayne and Dave surely. Email: paul.worster@tesco.net; or Tel: 01453 837355.

Paul Worster

South Coast

February already! As I wrote this I was busy getting prepared for Harrogate Week and still in detox. Detox and Harrogate just shouldn't be mentioned in the same sentence. We have at last had a cooler winter, although it doesn't seem to have had the usual effect on our Fusarium outbreaks and we all have to deal with frost greens and course closures.

Winter programmes are at full speed and we are already dreaming of spring and summer and warmer temperatures, although it seems to be fairly warm around the fires that seem to be constantly burning at Parkstone. Yes we are removing some more trees as part of our heathland restoration program.

Let me be the first to congratulate Fred Deamen on his selection onto the BIGGA and Bernhard's Delegation, which will travel to the GCSAA Show in Atlanta later this month. I know Fred is delighted and looking forward to a memorable trip of a

lifetime along with making new friends from the UK and the USA. Having been myself I know exactly what to expect, a gruelling schedule but a fantastic time! Take plenty of pictures Fred and we look forward to hearing all about it at next year's Section seminar!

Our Section seminar has been finalised and details should be with you all now. The seminar is on March 2 at Canford Magna Golf Club. The theme for the day is managing expectations and sustainable golf, which is still highly topical at the moment. Speakers on the day are Euan Grant, Head Greenkeeper, Old Course St Andrews; Alistair Beggs, Northern Area Manager, STRI; Laurence Pithe, Director of Agronomy Crown Golf; Paul Worster, Course Manager, Minchinhampton Golf Club; Kate Entwistle, The Turf Disease Centre.

The day is sponsored by BIGGA Gold and Silver Key holders, Tower Chemicals and Banks Amenity Products, and our thanks go out to them for their valued support. Price for the day is £15 for members and £20 for non members. This includes coffee on arrival and lunch. I suggest you return your completed application forms with full payment promptly as last year's sold out very quickly and places are again limited.

All payments should be sent to Alex McCombie, 10 St Michaels Close, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset BH15 4QT. If you have any enquires then call me on 07966 386232.

Many thanks to Phil Sharp, of Sharp Golf, for again sponsoring our fixture cards. These should also be with you now. If you haven't received yours please contact me.

I will report on Harrogate Week next month and leave you with this thought 'Live each day with a positive purpose set firmly in front of you. When you have a reason, you will find a way'.

Until next month
Alex McCombie

Devon & Cornwall

To coin a phrase by the well know actor Victor Meldrew "I don't believe it". Another year has arrived upon us, where has the past year gone? By the time this article is printed in the February issue of Greenkeeper International I will be thinking of all the golf clubs that will be holding their AGM. I immediately think new Captain and Chairman of the Greens' Committee, and all the Head Greenkeepers thinking "Oh no, not him again".

The new Captain will endeavour to make a name for himself by adding more bunkers, when the previous Captain removed the ones that he was driving into with his tee shot. The new Chairman of Greens, who has a handicap of 2 or 3, will endeavour to set the course up for all the single handicappers with their big Bertha Drivers, and using the modern Pro V Golf Balls, without any thought to the average members. The backbone of any club are the members who play off a handicap of between 12 and 24, take part in all weathers, never moan and who enjoy a few pints and a meal after playing.

It is unfortunate that the players with low handicaps will always moan to the Committee when they have had a bad round, and the Committee Members will take note and try and keep them happy. This is mainly because they are frightened they will lose them to another club and not have a strong team for the inter club competitions. Having been Chairman of the Greens' Committee at my own club for many a year in the late seventies/early eighties, I can honestly say I have seen it all before. So I wish you all good luck for 2006.

2005 ended with our Christmas party at Okehampton Golf Club on December 6 with a marvellous attendance and another full house. We are so lucky because we virtually take over the course and club.

A big thank you must go to Clive, the Club Secretary, and his Committee for allowing us to use the Club's facilities for the day, and it goes without saying to the members as well. I can't think of many clubs that would be so generous.

The day commenced with 50 golfers participating in a Greensomes Competition with a Shotgun Start. The non golfers went on a course walk, ably led by Richard Wisdon, the Head Greenkeeper, who was under strict instructions to lead them to behind the seventh green where the hospitality tent was situated, need I say any more. A huge thank you to P.J. Flegg from Otter St Mary for their sponsorship for the day, not to mention the hospitality tent. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Watson, the Sales Manager, Clive Ralph, the Sales Representative, and Joe Turner, the Area Sales Manager for Ransomes Jacobson, who helped make the day go with a swing.

The Shotgun Start certainly made a big difference to the running of the day, especially for the caterers. It meant that everyone was able to sit down for the

Christmas dinner at 1.30pm.

After lunch we were entertained by Adger Brown, a comedian from St Leonards on Sea, who was one of the best we have ever been entertained by. He had us splitting our sides with laughter from start to finish. This was followed by the draw prize giving. Thanks to our members' generosity and the trade members we had some 65 prizes to be distributed, not to mention the food hamper supplied by Our President, John Palfrey of Avoncrop, and the wine at the table.

The winners of the P.J. Flegg Greensomes competition were as follows: 1. T. Hirst and L. Overy, 36pts; 2. P. Standen and S. Gaylard, 36pts; 3. T. Martin and W. Hutchinson, 33pts.

Owing to the heavy rainfall the previous day, the competition was played over 15 holes and I would like to thank Richard, the Head Greenkeeper, for presenting the course in such good conditions. Well done Richard.

Looking forward to meeting you all at the Warren Golf Club on Wednesday February 15, which will be sponsored by Barenburg.

Have a great year.

Donovan O Hunt

Events Coordinator

South Wales

Quite a quiet month, not much info or gossip going around. I hope all that attended Harrogate Week had a good time.

The results from the winter Christmas competition, held annually at Pyle and Kenfig, on Friday December 9 are: 1. Daryl Bray, Morrision, 36pts; 2. Kerry Jones, Garnant Parc, 35pts; 3 & Best Trade. Nick Rawlings, Complete Weed Control, 35pts; 4. Nigel Ruck, Glynhir, 33pts; 5. David Gladwin, Carmarthen, 33pts. Longest Drive. Jamie Probert, Pontardawe, Nearest the Pins. Nick Rawlings, Alun Crichton, Colin Thomas and Adrian Masters.

Best Aggregate score throughout the season, over four competitions, is David Gladwin. How good a golfer is he going to be now he is retired? Pleased to see Daryl Bray back in the winner's enclosure. The missus let you attend one of our golf days I see. Apologies for absence on the day from - Keith Price, President WGU; Course Manager Ray Hunt; Captain of P&K, John Saville; Chairman, Russell Anderson - away cruising the Med; IPC, Angus Macleod - Childminding duties; Golf Team Captain, Andy Roach; and our old friends, Marion and Gordon Child - whom we hope has made a full recovery and is well again.

Thanks to club for there hospitality and to the caterers, Rob and staff. I am informed the carvery Christmas dinner was excellent. Many thanks to Ray Hunt and his green staff. I am also informed the course, as always, was in great shape, greens running about 11 on the stimp and at 7mm.

33 golfers took to the course and 45 attended the dinner. A great day thanks to John Mullins and Vitax together with Kim Davies and Celtic Mowers for their continued support and sponsorship. Big thanks to all those who brought along prizes for the raffle.

Change of fixture date - The Golf Management Trophy, at Neath Golf Club, will be played on Thursday July 27 instead of 20th to avoid clashing with The Open at Hoylake.

We would like to wish Herbie Probert, from Pontardawe Golf Club, all the best for a long and healthy retirement. Hopefully, we will still see him on our golf days or they are going to be very quite indeed. Fixture cards will be issued shortly when all events have been confirmed - still awaiting on one. The series of winter education evenings are well under way and I look forward to catching up with you all there.

Angus Macleod

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.

If you have a BIGGA event that you wish to place on the Events Page contact Gareth at BIGGA HOUSE on gareth@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 gareth@bigga.co.uk by no later than the 5th of the month prior to publication please.

Word limited for Section notes: 500-600.

You will receive an email back to confirm receipt of your notes.

If you do not receive this confirmation please get in touch with BIGGA HQ.

In the Shed ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

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ANAGRAM

THAT GREAT CHARMER - MARGARET THATCHER
ENDLESS INSOBRIETY TRIP - PRESIDENT BORIS YELTSIN

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



A QUICK NINE HOLES

- 1974
- Tim Boon
- Llanelli Scarlets
- Alan Shearer
- Ruby Walsh
- QPR
- Zab Judah
- Millennium Stadium
- San Sebastian