



News from the Chief Executive

Harrogate Week 2007 – a week to remember for all the right reasons. There is no doubt that this event has grown to be the major turf management Conference and Exhibition in Europe. The support by members was unprecedented while exhibitors extolled the virtues of being there with many rebooking for 2008 at the show. I was pleased to witness crowded halls and very busy education workshops and seminars, proving to those sceptics that predicted a poor attendance that there is a healthy demand for an annual event and that Harrogate is a viable venue.

Harrogate Week 2007 will produce a good profit, however, not good enough for this size of event to be acceptable for the long-term success of the Association without some sort of cut to overheads. Plans for Harrogate Week 2008 are already under way and the major machinery manufacturers have expressed a wish to exhibit in accordance with their marketing strategy. Just where they will be allocated space will need careful consideration and full consultation however exhibitors in 2007 have been assured priority booking until February 28.

FEGGA is playing a pivotal role in the development of greenkeeping across Europe, especially in the 'emerging' countries. BIGGA, once a founder member, withdrew its membership several years ago, mainly due to a difference of opinion between the two organisations. Times have moved on and differences have been resolved. Unification is the way forward and BIGGA has applied to rejoin following discussions with the executive of FEGGA. The application will be considered in February at FEGGA's AGM and Conference in Slovenia.

FEGGA, BIGGA and the GTC are in discussions regarding the introduction of Pan-European greenkeeping qualifications that will facilitate a better understanding of the skill levels of those wishing to work outside their native country and Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, will be able to give you more information.

10 years ago we were expressing concerns about increasing pressure relating to environmental issues. Today those issues have been developed into major political agendas and golf is very much in the forefront. There is no doubt that resources such as water and chemical treatments will come under more and more scrutiny and BIGGA is working with or represented on several focus groups in an attempt to manage change rather than be driven by it. Golf as a business is also changing and the boom period of the 1990's is now behind us all. Golfers expect to be able to play 365 days of the year on courses that are in their opinion perfect. In general there is keen competition between clubs for members and visitors to the point where more and more clubs are becoming heavily reliant upon casual green fees. Those that have so far escaped this treadmill are fortunate.

Like it or not we live in a climate where numbers count and the larger any organisation can become the more chance it has of having an effective voice both commercially and politically. To this end, as you may be aware, representatives of the BIGGA Board of Management recently met with representatives of the IOG and it has been agreed that the two organisations will look at the potential of a strategic merger for the benefit of their respective memberships. I am aware that this is a very emotive issue and there will be a diverse range of views. There will be transparency of operation and detailed consultation with the members at all stages. I would urge your patience and ask that you consider matters fully rather than adopting a 'knee jerk' reaction. Reservations by members of both the IOG and BIGGA will be addressed and it is the intention to be able to put a detailed proposal to members of both organisations in January 2008. The Board assures the membership that no binding agreement will be made without their approval. There is no doubt that a merger would bring new challenges, however, it will also bring new opportunities that will benefit both greenkeepers and groundsmen. I will be happy at any time to discuss the proposals with members who can either ring me at Headquarters or send me an email. During the course of 2007 my colleagues and I intend visiting many of the Section and Region events and I hope that members will take the opportunity to speak with us on this and any other matter. Your views are important and will help us develop the Association.

John Pemberton

SCOTTISH REGION

CENTRAL

First things first, I hope you all had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

It's the time of year when we all have our Christmas nights out, go for a meal and a drink and thank your staff for their support and commitment over the past season. This year we (The Scoonie Boys) met up with the Leven Links Lads for a games night, pool, darts, and bowls, Scoonie went down 2-1 – I think we were at a disadvantage as I have heard that the Leven lads have a pool table and darts board in there booth, true or not? Mind you there's always next year.

By the time you read this BTME will have come and gone - a great place to meet old friends, make new ones, eat good food, and have a few shandies. There is a great opportunity to learn something new from the excellent workshops and seminars on offer. Anyone that hasn't been to BTME should make a point of planning a trip down next year.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Alistair Tough, (Auchterarder GC), James Wilson, (St Andrews Links Trust) and Stuart Harley, (Royal Burgess), who all joined the Section recently. I look forward to meeting you at future events.

As for Section news the spring outing this year is at Panmure, a qualifying course for the 2007 open at Carnoustie, to be granted permission to play prior to the qualifying is a major coup for the Section. Many thanks to all involved in achieving this. This will be a superb test of golf for all and places will be on a first come first served basis, so please return forms as soon as you receive them. The Central Section looks forward to seeing you on the day.

Frank Newberry, who many of you may know already, presented the evening seminar, at Elmwood last month. 14 guys turned out to listen to Frank's enthusiastic presentation which kept everyone entertained, and the topic (The Influential Greenkeeper) was of great interest to us all.

Let's get involved, it's your Section

The Section are arranging various workshops in 2007 dates and time can be found on our website, If there are any subjects you think we haven't covered and would like to have, please get in touch and the committee will endeavour to arrange one. The website is growing all the time with good articles and interesting pictures, but we need your help, please send anything you would like added to the site i.e. pics, articles, any news you want to share with the Section, lets get involved it's your Section.

Well that's me, I better go dry off my wet clothes, this rain! When will it snow? (Just joking)

Bye for now

Derek Scott

Chairman

www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

EAST

I write this report with the festive season fast becoming a distant memory and Harrogate looming large before my eyes!

The weather, apart from a few days of sharp frost during Christmas, has been unseasonably mild with high winds and torrential rain falling during December and the early part of January - The exception to the rule being the Aberdeen area where less than 60mm of rain fell during December.

On Friday, March 2, Ratho Park GC, in conjunction with the Scottish Golf Environment Group, are holding an Open Forum to discuss climate change and environmental issues affecting golf clubs. The organisers are hoping for a good turnout from Greenkeepers and Groundsmen, as well as their own club members. The speakers on the night, which starts at 7.30pm, are as follows; Carolyn Headly – SGEG; Stuart Smith – Lothian Bat Group;

Richard Windows – STRI; Chris White – Cut Above, Tree Surgeons. For further information, or to book your place, contact Tom Murray: on 0131 333 4126 or: 07709 960163.

I have news this month of two former East Section members. The first, Richard Mullen, former head man at Swanston and latterly at Old Meldrum, has moved along the road to take the position of Deputy at the acclaimed Meldrum House Golf Resort. The vacant post at Old Meldrum has been filled by Robert O'Donnell who served his apprenticeship at Torphin Hills under two head men, Graeme Hobbs and the current incumbent Ruairidh Campbell. A young man also on the move is Danny Murray, recently returned from his time at Winged Foot, scene of the 2006 US Open, he has now joined Chris Kennedy's ex-pats at Wentworth, where I understand he is working on the West Course.

Finally, I had a discussion this week with my fellow scribe who writes the North Section report, Robert Patterson, about the difficulty in obtaining information for the monthly column. We agreed that the column is only as good as the information provided, so please help us by passing on your news and views!

Until next month,
Don't work too hard!
Mike Dooner

NORTH

Harrogate will have come and gone by now, and I'm sure there will have been a few sore heads that week. I hope it went well for you all.

Bob Hardie from Craibstone GC will now be doing the 200 club. He took over from Hugh McClatchie after the AGM in October. I think Hugh deserves a vote of thanks from all members for keeping the 200 club going, even when members weren't buying the tickets. So well done Hugh, your efforts are appreciated and all your hard work over the years.

During late February a letter will go out from Bob about the 200 club, which is again being sponsored by Scotts and we thank them and Gary Smith for their support this year. There are currently around 140 tickets being used by the membership but it would be beneficial to the Section as a whole if more members would take the tickets that are left to boost funds. Bob has said that any members without a ticket can send him a text message on: 07841-993772 with their membership number and he will forward a ticket to them. The fee at £7 is still very good value.

There is very little happening in the Section at the moment. The weather so far this winter has been favourable but I said that last year and we ended up with a foot of snow for a fortnight in March, so here's hoping it won't get too bad.

Robert N Patterson
Royal Aberdeen GC

WEST

Happy New Year to everyone in the Section, I hope you all got the presents you wanted from Santa.

On walking home on Hogmanay through the gales and heavy rain I was approaching our golf club road and I looked to my left hand side and saw a 25 foot lime lying across the road so I had to return to work to remove the tree so members celebrating their New Year's party could get home so it was a great start to my New Year.

I was very fortunate to win this year's Patrons Award from the Section, I attended the awards dinner at the Terraces Hotel – it was a first class day with the speaker John Copland giving a first class speech.

The patrons do a first class job within the whole of the Scottish region and I would like to thank you on behalf of all the winners from all the Sections in Scotland.

Myself and Steven Sheehan from East Kilbride GC will be attending Harrogate as part of our prize.

Many thanks to Peter Boyd for arranging the day's events. I would like to wish Stuart Greenwood all the best over the next two years as new Chairman of the Scottish Region, I know Stuart will do a great Job.

We would like to welcome a new member to the Section. Ian Craig from Elderslie GC – hope to see you at some events during 2007.

Congratulations to Jack Steadward who has left Douglas Park after 17 years service. Jack has taken up a new post at the Carrick Golf course on the banks of Loch Lomond, all the best from all at the Section.

On a sad note our thoughts go out to Alistair Connell who lost his partner Ann over the Christmas period. Alistair has been a long time member of the West Section and we pass on our condolences to all the family.

Course news – The months of November and December has brought us some miserable weather but spare a thought for George McCutcheon and his staff at Bellshill GC.

During the wet period the club has seen a spate of mindless vandalism, mostly on the greens in which the 18th and 15th were damaged by Diesel and all other greens badly dug up. On top of this 25 new standard trees were also destroyed, this industry is bad enough without idiots making our job harder.

Hopefully 2007 will bring better fortune for George and Bellshill GC.

Just to remind members our autumn outing will be held over Vale of Leven GC, during September.

We are still awaiting confirmation of our spring outing, hopefully this will be sorted as soon as possible.

We still intend to hold a trip to the Carrick GC during spring; the weather has held us back in confirming dates, members will be notified as soon as possible.

When you receive this report we will all be back from Harrogate planning our season's programmes, hopefully 2007 will bring us some good weather - it may even stop raining from time to time.

Well, that's all for now, see you next month.

Fraser Ross
Mobile: 07970 366 355
Email: karen.ross@tesco.net

NORTHERN REGION

NORTH EAST

Well not much to write about this month, just more bad news. Members are leaving the profession – Roy White and Andrew Morrison both from Stocksfield GC and A Wishart from Tyneside GC, looks like there could be a bit of movement within the Section shortly. I was talking to Craig Parkinson from Matfen Hall GC and he was telling me that the new nine holes will be opening in June for about 16 weeks, and I can tell you they are quite impressive holes.

Although we are losing three members, we have also gained two new ones and they are: James McCarthy, Whitley Bay and Robert Hill, Alnmouth Village GC - on behalf of the Section we wish you both well.

Due to a mix up at HQ, Jimmy's December notes were not published, so here they are:

In November we finally got our annual match against the East of Scotland played after being cancelled from October, and boy did we get a hammering losing 4-1, had it been played on the original date, I'm sure the score would have been reversed as at that time we had a full team. We had a couple of friends playing for us and also may I thank the two greenkeepers from the home club (Bamburgh Castle) for their part in the team – I reckon it would have been a 5-0 loss if it wasn't for them.

As most people knew, Stewarts of Edinburgh had sponsored this event for the last 25 years and recently have been taken over by Aitkens who have said that they are going to carry on with this event in the future, so it would be nice if more greenkeepers were eager to play – as they used to be once upon a time.

Jimmy Richardson



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NORTH WEST

As I compile these notes, Harrogate is only weeks away. I am looking forward to it to see what impact, if any, we will have this year. It is difficult compiling the notes because I have to submit them a month in advance and as I did not get a crystal ball for Christmas, I can't predict the future.

Please get in touch if you have anything you would like to share with us all, there must be many births, job changes or funny things that have happened – so please share them with us. Please support your Section this year; in 2006 all our events were well supported so please keep it up. 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. Mt email address is: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk.

Chris Sheehan

BENEFIT GOLF DAY

Withington GC in Manchester, will be holding a Benefit Golf Day on Tuesday, March 20.

The day is to celebrate Head Greenkeeper of 26 years, Stuart Bridge's recovery. Stuart was involved in a motorbike accident on his way to work last November and is finally on the road to recovery.

The competition is open to greenkeepers, groundsman and friends, and costs £20 per person (with a meal and prizes included).

The day will start at 10.30am and all the money raised will go to Stuart's family.

Those of you who are interested in coming are asked to phone Sid Pugh on: 07811522758 or Henry Royle on: 07850698138. Entries must be in by March 9.

SHEFFIELD

Firstly may I wish you all a belated Happy New Year, as there was no news for last month's edition.

On December 11, we held our Christmas competition and AGM at Worksoop GC. May I thank Worksoop for giving us the courtesy of their course which is very much appreciated. Unfortunately the weather tried its best to spoil things with very heavy overnight rain continuing into the morning but due to Worksoop's naturally good drainage we managed to play our competition, actually in very nice weather for December, when it stopped raining. Thanks go to Tim Gittins and his staff for the condition of Worksoop (nothing like dropping you in at the deep end Tim!) Tim had only been in charge at Worksoop for six weeks! Thanks also go to Mike Brier and Rigby Taylor for being the main sponsors of the event once again, your support of the section is appreciated. Thanks also to all the other trade and guests who provided prizes for the raffle. Final thanks go to Joe and Jayne and their staff for providing an excellent meal that was enjoyed by everyone.

I am sure that everyone enjoyed playing golf, even on the temporary greens and there was some very good scoring. The eventual winner was Stuart Fricker from Bondhay GC with 43 pts, congratulations Stuart (I think your Craig must have given you some tips!). 2. J Shaw, 43pts; 3. T Boyd, 42pts; 4. R Needham, 41pts; 5. A Whittington, 40pts.

Everyone who played received a prize as usual in our Christmas competition and with an excellent raffle table some people went home with a lot more than they came with, thanks to Peter Fell for selling the raffle tickets, once again you are a natural!

After the golf we held our AGM which was attended by a good number of our members. It ran fairly smoothly with nothing much to report really, apart from the Section had a very successful year again. There were two resignations from the committee – Dave Chappell and Kevin Kelsall, who I would both like to thank for all the work they have put into the section over the years, thank you! James Steven volunteered to come on to the committee, we all look forward to working with you this coming year.

The day was also a special day for three people in our section who had retired during the year and with well over 100 years service between them I think they all deserved their retirement gifts from the Section! They were:

MIDLAND REGION

EAST MIDLAND

Not much to report on this month besides the go-karting that has been booked for Wednesday, February 21. This will be a two man team event and there are still a few places remaining if you are interested. Please contact me (Dan Rodgers) on: 07745227224 or: HEAD.GREENKEEPER@SHIRLANDGOLFCLUB.CO.UK.

The price for the event is £20.85 per person and there is a maximum of 24 places available.

Dan Rodgers

MIDLAND

Is it me or are we not supposed to fly south for the winter? Of course it is. I write this month's notes after spending New Year in Reykjavik, firework city or what! However, our old friend Steve Wood got it right. He moved to Bulgaria (nearly free smokes and ale), met a lass somewhat younger than himself and kept her in tow by having a little girl by her. Jessica (surely the English for Jalzekia) arrived December 4. Well done Steve and mother.

On December 8 we held our Christmas Tournament at Broadway GC. What wonderful views, we can see why Elgar was so inspired by such on his walks. This was further enhanced by the wonderful condition of the course as presented by Mr C Gough and his fine greenkeeping team, very well done folks. Our thanks to the Club for their fine welcome, and gratitude to the catering and bar staff for their fine food and service. It was great to see you Cedric after too many a year. The results: 1. S Thompson and E Stant; 2. L Swann and B Bouchier; 3. A Smith and 4. S Hart and M Gash. Nearest the Pin: E Stant. Longest Drive: P Woodham. Our thanks to our main prize table sponsor Mark Chamberlain/Tacit, Champaign Ville. An extra prize for Nearest the Pin in two was provided by N Tyler and won by M Hughes. Don't forget to get your entries in for the Spring Tournament to Gary, which is to be held at Ludlow GC on May 9.

As these notes are written before BTME you shall have to wait until next month for any poignant stories or news.

This month's Calendar picture has kindly been sponsored by Turner Groundscare/Robert Page. They have also, for a number of years, been kind enough to provide refreshments and sustenance in a mobile manner during our golfing events. "And then an angel appeared from within the woods" Our thanks to them for their continued support of our Section.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome two new members to our fine Section. Such being: Adam Wood (not related to the afore or below) and Ian Lloyd. Please remember that I am a link between you and many subsidised educational possibilities within our very diverse field of greenkeeping, ranging from sweeping-up (H&S), agronomy, through to machinery maintenance and tree surgery. Please take advantage of both your Section's, and HQ's efforts as a whole. We are here to serve you, our members.

Finally it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Barry Wood on his 50th Birthday on March 3. With thanks to his lovely wife Elaine for her wonderful foresight in informing me of such. I don't fancy the last dance again mate (I'm dead now) but please save one for me baby. Happy Birthday mate.

Sean McDade

BB&O

Harrogate! Great entertainment with fantastic educational workshops and seminars to kick off 2007 with a bang, and a small hangover. I am sure a great time was had by all who enjoyed superb company with friends new and old to pass the time away, unbeatable BTME, long live the show!

Dean Jones, the new Section Secretary, has been busy organising forthcoming events for 2007, kicking off with the first event on the agenda – The Spring National Qualifier hosted by Wycombe Heights GC and under the leadership of the legend dart player himself, The Great Surgey.

Barry Lax, Les Easthope and Roy Ward, may you all have a long and enjoyable retirement. Barry and Roy received an engraved decanter each and Les received a printer/scanner. May I wish you all have a long and enjoyable retirement from everyone in the Sheffield Section.

Finally, congratulations go to Daryll Curtis on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Lofthouse Hill GC nr Wakefield, Daryll moves to Lofthouse from Lees Hall GC – all the best in the future Daryll from everyone in the Sheffield Section. Just to add to that, Dave Womack and all the greenkeepers at Lees Hall wish to say well done and good luck with your new job!

As usual, any news feel free to contact me on: 07793111845 or: jv.lax@tesco.net

John Lax

NORTH WALES

Hello everyone. Stuart from Lymm GC being your scribe this month.

Short notes this time I'm afraid after the BTME Swaray. Like the BBC 2 programme 'Have I got news for you,' this month we have a stand in presenter as Mr Andrew Cornes battles his Harrogate dinner addiction following on from the festivities and feasting. It is a sad and deliberating condition and we all wish him well. He is getting treatment as we speak, but I fear he may have to go 'cold turkey'.

Not much to report this month only to congratulate all involved in the Xmas tournament at Conwy GC. I have always had great memories of Conwy, catching crabs off the harbour, a pint in the Liverpool Arms, getting stuck in the smallest house in the UK and lovely Fish and Chips. Sadly I hope to very quickly forget all memories of this competition as we all played golf in the most horrendous of conditions. Blowing gales, horizontal driving rains, and the fact that, I could only manage four bacon sandwiches before we went out. The course was a credit to Dave Lewis and his team who battled the conditions to provide us all with a stern test. The hot showers were also fantastic as was the welcome, warming food. Thank you to all. The results are as follows: 1. Darren Anderson, Chris Langdon, John Lloyd Jones & Dave Austin; 2. Jeremy Hughes, Hadon Jones, Terry Dodd & George Whitbey; 3. Paul Walker, Trevor Rowlands & John Currie; Nearest the pin on the 2nd John Hunfries & 15th Joe Holdsworth.

The Spring North Wales/North West Seminar is hotting up already and looks to be a stonker! It's being held at Wilmslow GC on Friday, March 9. It starts at 9.15 and is carrying on from the "sustainable golf" theme from Harrogate. We don't want to bore people about this new buzzword so there will be a twist. It is hoped we can apply sustainability to the real world, and hopefully the speakers will reflect that.

The speakers are Steve Oultram – Sustainability at Wilmslow GC; Alistair Beggs (STRI) – Natural Greenkeeping and Disturbance Theory; John Allbutt – Chemicals and their Legislation (How we are to be affected); Stuart Yarwood (Course Manager Lymm GC) – We are not Alone! (A short story by a Gingerbread Man); Bob Taylor (STRI) – Sustainability and Ecology on the Golf Course; Frank Newberry – Getting your message across (The art of Communication) – and a couple of surprise guests, who will all add to a fantastic day! Details are being sent out as we speak so get your replies in early.

Hope all your wading through puddles is working off the Christmas wobbles and that it stops raining soon. It might even be nice to get a little frost. I have a very strange feeling it may be a late spring. Carrying on from the nice debate we had in Harrogate over a pint of crème de menthe in the warm snug of Wetherspoons.

Hope you had a good one and keep paddling.

But remember when the chips are down – "A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort." – Herm Albright

Stuart Yarwood



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



Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
 Tel: 01476 550115

The Summer Tournament will be held at Sonning GC on American Independence Day and Newbury and Cookham GC hosting the Autumn Invitational. A Clay Shooting Day is at planning stage and will take place in the later part of the year.

As the last event closes the Section for the year, Bill Patterson will be looking forward to welcoming the Section to The Turkey Trot and AGM at Beaconsfield GC.

Education Seminars are in the early stages of development, and on the agenda are plans to approach interesting and varied speakers to stimulate the grey matter, also making these venues enjoyable with topics that will motivate a wider audience throughout the BBO Section. Dates for all these venues and special events will be published as they are confirmed.

News from around the green with new, first time dad club member, Course Manager Ian Upton from Rye Hill GC who is now the proud father and celebrates the birth of baby Lucie – Congratulations to you all.

If any member has any news or views they would like to share, or would like more information about the Section and forthcoming events in 2007 you only have to log your cyberspace details and email address with the new Secretary, Dean Jones, who will be only too pleased to keep you informed and up to date. Dean can be contacted on:

d.jones51@tiscali.co.uk

Mark Day
 mark@day.fm

SOUTH EAST

KENT

As I sit here at the start of another year, pondering over my objectives for the coming year, one can't help but wonder what lies in store for us all over the forthcoming months. With the wettest winter period in years upon us, many courses in my area are seriously struggling to cope with increasingly wet ground conditions and a hardier breed of golfer who seems impervious to rainfall that would have Noah himself heading down to the local timber yard. I've even heard a prediction from a scientist this evening threatening the hottest summer ever this year! No doubt there will be more drought orders imposed on us all down south again, the way my course is at the moment, however, it'll probably take a year to dry out if it stopped raining tomorrow!

You can't beat a good old whinge about the weather can you!

Some great news from our esteemed Chairman Kev Morris. At the ripe old age of 40 he is now a very proud grandfather to baby Liliane. Congratulations Pops!

We are compiling a year's programme of events which will hopefully be available soon but we kick off this month with our final winter seminar at Hadlow College on February 13. These free events are open to anyone and run from 10am to 4pm with some excellent topics being covered at every session. If you need more details please call me on the number below. This event shall be followed at 6pm on the same day by our annual night golf event at Birchwood Park. This is great fun and again open to anyone



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whether you have been to the seminar or not.

Your committee on the Kent Section are endeavouring to appeal to the masses to try and build on our successes of the last couple of years, so if you have any ideas of events, trips or any other pursuit you would like us to organise then please feel free to contact any of us with your suggestions.

Best of British to one and all
Rob Holland
07843 410755

SUSSEX

Hello again.

Just before Christmas we had a football match against Surrey, up at Colliers Wood. I would like thank all the people at Colliers Wood for providing the venue and laying on the refreshments. A big thank you to Dave Langham who organised things at Surrey's end. The game itself was a full-blooded affair, with some good football played by both sides. Surrey took a two goal start in the first 20 minutes. Sussex rallied and with a good team performance, managed to pull one back by half time, which was scored by young Sam Lake. After half time the guys really played well and went 3-2 up with goals coming from Captain Matty Ash and Jon Thomson. As the game went on, Surrey pushed for the equaliser which they got 10 minutes from time. A draw was the fair result and a big thank you to everyone who took part.

Anyone who would like to participate in the next match please contact me on: 07776223234 or: robert.hudson77@btinternet.com

Moving onto the golf. I know Dave Ansell, our Fixtures Secretary, is looking for venues for golf days, so if you would like to put your course forward please contact me. It can be for this year or the following.

I would like to say congratulations to Matt Crossley and his wife Claire who gave birth to a baby girl on December 13, which they have called Daisy. All the best to them.

If there is any news that I can include in Around the Green please let me know. All the best for now and a Happy New Year.

Rob Hudson

EAST ANGLIA

Over 100 people attended our annual Turkey Trot at Thorpeness on December 13, sponsored by CMW, and the AGM. What a lovely day it was too. The course was pristine as is now the norm for Ian and his men, one of who was responsible for the pin positions. Stand up and be shot Mark Henderson. (I thought Billy Connolly was the only Scotsman with a sense of humour). Well done Mark, I thought they were brilliant for what it's worth.

A few others that also had no problems were: 1. (Funnily enough) Mark Henderson; Peter and John Howard; and Ray Forman who made up the Thorpeness 'A' Team and scored 56.3 (Texas Scramble don't forget); 2. Glen Rayfield; Barry Hanks; Peter Cooney and Neville Rowlandson made up Felixstowe Ferry and scored 56.9 and 3. Richard Lewis; Rob George; Dale Baldwin and Nick Ashman who made up the score, only joking, no name for team so we'll call them "Billy No Mates". They scored 57.8.

A few others to be mentioned in dispatches were: John Howard, Nearest the pin on the 2nd sponsored by Aitkens; Neil Worger, Nearest the pin on the 10th sponsored by Lely UK; Stuart Robson, Nearest the pin on the 7th sponsored by Tomlinson Groundcare; David Hawkins, Nearest the pin on the 16th sponsored by Ben Burgess; Richard Lewis, Nearest the pin in 2 on the 6th sponsored by Tacit; Kevin McColm, Longest drive on the 1st sponsored by Ernest Doe; John Howard, Longest drive on the 4th sponsored by Prime and Glen Rayfield, Longest drive on the 18th sponsored by Tower Chemicals.

All prizes were awarded by Richard Newton, Thorpeness Captain.

The man in charge of the soup kitchen half way round was David. The catering was lovely and the 'well oiled machine' was run by Ian, who was not well oiled, well at least not at the start! Thank you Thorpeness once again for a super day.

Our most sincere thank you's must go to our trade members who do a fantastic job in supporting us throughout the year. Our section is acknowledged as being the best run and best supported in the country (ask Essex) and it is all down to Ian and the trade guys & gals. We thank you all. The hall of fame is as follows: Aitkins; Atherton and Ellis; Bartram Mowers; Ben Burgess; Collier Turf Care; Consultant Clarkson; Ernest Doe; Headland Turf; Lely UK; Midlube; Prime Irrigation; Rigby Taylor; Sherriff; Sisis; Tacit; Textron; Tomlinson Groundcare; Tower Chemicals. (Apologies if we have missed anyone out).

Then came the AGM.

A fairly quiet affair. Ian would like all applications back at least one week prior to the tournament. The AGM may be before the meal this year in the hope that more will be involved. (There were only 12 of us at this one).

If you have any questions for next years AGM you will have a chance to write in prior to the AGM in order that any problems can be sorted out and save a lot of time.

I had the good fortune to have the Thorpeness President, Brian Lindores in our team and he said they had a meeting that lasted three minutes and that included a two-minute silence for a deceased member. Well I reckon we can match that. I don't know about the deceased bit though.

Actually thinking about it we did have one of our true characters pass on at the beginning of December. It was Toddy Huddlestone; he was 93 years old and will be sadly missed by all who knew him. Our sincere condolences to his family. I hope all of his expertise in greenkeeping is not wasted.

The President's Award went to one of our younger members. He was a finalist in the Young Greenkeeper Award; although he did not win we thought he deserved better, so well done Graham Brunton.

We must also welcome some new blood from Dunston Hall, good to have you aboard, we could do with some more 'Norfolks'.

As it happens we could seriously do with a few more venues in Norfolk to balance the travelling (ask Roger).

Congratulations once again to Ian Willett on his term of office as Regional Chairman.

Incidentally, all the officers were re-elected so you'll have to put up with my waffle for another year.

Mick Lathrope

ESSEX

Another season is shortly round the corner with the winter weather being somewhat strange and who knows what is to come? More of the same and more they have said on the news tonight, this will test the resolve of our greenkeeping skills.

2006 was a year of change and challenge, and it looks like the one to come will be very much the same.

The Christmas tournament held at Blake's, Nr Epping at the beginning of December was no different weatherwise. We arrived to lashing rain and everyone was contemplating a day of waterproofs and feeling miserable, but when the hour arrived so did the sun and off we went with a spring in our step and battle commenced. The course, although only a year or so old, was very challenging and produced some good scores. Our thanks go to the Head Greenkeeper, Darren Dowsett and his staff, who despite the poor weather conditions over the days leading up to the tournament produced a course to be proud of. To the owner of Blake's, Phil Newman, and his clubhouse staff, we also give our thanks for the fine food and hospitality we received.

Hopefully we will be able to return to replay the course in the not too distant future.

Texas scramble was the format of the day and Antony Kirwan did a fine job in mixing the teams to give an even field. 1. R. Hare, S. Barber, S. Cook & L. Springett with a Net 59; 2. on count back and also 59 was N. Gates, P. Whaley, T. Wolfe & B. Scrivener. 3. A. Kerwan, R. Lewis, A. McCreddie & D. Baldwin. 4. T. Smith, J. Selwood, S. Jenkins & I. Wood.

A fantastic turnout on the day, of our largest field of the year we did our sponsor for the day proud; we would like to thank Scott's and Michael Fance for a day to remember.

As usual we had a good raffle prize table, supplied by the many trade representatives that support us through the year and I would like to thank them for their support.

This year's trophies were won by the following members. Spring – Nick Gates; Summer – Nick Gates; Autumn – Tom Smith; Winter – Mark Phipps-Jones. Golfer of the Year was Nick Gates.

We introduced a new trophy this year, in recognition of the support that we receive from the trade. This a competition played over the year for the most consistent trade member. This year the winner is Neil Peachey of P Tuckwell Ltd. I'm sure that with the introduction of this new trophy the competition will be fierce next year for the honour of being the trade golfing member of the year.

The AGM followed the meal and the following were elected to office. Chairman, Don Clarke. Vice Chairman & Scribe, Arnold Phipps-Jones. Secretary, Martin Forrester. Treasurer, Tom Smith. Competitions & handicap, Antony Kerwan. Education, Paul O'Kane.

I would like to thank Clive Osgood for attending and giving us his words of wisdom also for giving his support at our meetings over the year. As far as I can remember he has not missed an event all year, hopefully he will venture out with his clubs on the odd occasion this coming season.

This season's fixtures are as follows: Spring, Gosfield Lake. Summer Medal, Theybois GC. Autumn, Colchester GC. Winter, North Weald. Christmas Texas Scramble, Orsett. Dates are to be confirmed and you will have these in next month's report.

As a last note I received a phone call this evening just as I was finishing this report of the following news; I am sure that you would all like to join me in congratulating Antony Kerwan and his wife on the birth of their second child, on 3rd January, a baby boy, who they have named Seth.

Anyone who has any news for inclusion in the Around the Green section can email me: highwoods.photographic@virgin.net or call: 01206-852.353

Arnold Phipps-Jones

SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES

SOUTH WEST

The course at Bath GC was in fine condition for our Christmas Tournament 2006. Andy Boyce and his team made the most of a brief window in the weather to prepare it, and to be able to present it with only one temporary green with the weather as it was, was something of an achievement. Well done and thanks. A lot less well done to some of our Section members in the bar afterwards, speaking as the guy who writes to the clubs to arrange the fixtures and gives his personal assurance that all competitors will be bona fide members of BIGGA etc, I was not particularly impressed to receive a letter expressing concern at half drunken après-golf antics. We are (non-paying) guests at all the clubs and represent our profession on each and every occasion – so sharpen up. Nuff said.

Back at Minchinhampton the new lake is lined and filling rapidly. The only tiny snag is getting turf across what's left of the golf course and finding enough dry topsoil to finish off the landscaping. Abbott's have finished installing the Rainbird System on one course and are now moving across to wreck the other one! So if I ever write again suggesting major projects on the course, tell me not to be so stupid.

This comes out in early February by which time hopefully the weather will have cheered up and I'll have cheered up (although after last months report I've been accused of being one short of a full set of hub-caps) We'll all be looking forward to the first meeting at Stockwood Vale on February 22, with the golf followed by the Roger Davey lecture. Spring renovation and the new season will then be just around the corner. In the meantime I hope you've all

had a good week at Harrogate, and good luck on the courses in the early spring. The latest news from the area is the acquisition of The Bristol Golf Club by the Crown group. The Course Manager is David Nicholls, who runs the 18 holes plus nine hole par three, with six staff plus himself. The club is about seven years old and the course, which was built by John Pierson, is on the former deer park opposite Cribbs Causeway retail park. The Course has extensive views over the Bristol Channel and much work has been carried out over the last few years to address drainage and other typical post building opening problems. This brings the total number of properties in the Crown group to 32. This should keep Laurence Pithie busy for a while with his first in-house training day at the Bristol already booked into the calendar.

Finally, the weather is making the headlines at the moment. Laurence kindly sent me some rainfall figures from across the Crown properties. The Bristol Club recorded 830mm in 2006, against a paltry 503 at Hampton Court, and spare a thought for the guys at St Mellion International, near Plymouth – 1214mm. Laurence added, "2006 was also one of the warmest years ever recorded and 2003 and 2005 weren't far behind.

The latter end of 2006 was also devoid of much frost with winter temperatures well above average.

From a 'turf' standpoint, only August was a month that was helpful, being warm and reasonably moist. In most 2006 months, it was either too cold, too dry or too wet, making life challenging to say the least.

As always, predicting what lies ahead is pure guesswork and conditions can change fairly rapidly". My thoughts exactly! The 2007 fixture list is now complete and will be landing on your doormats in the near future – in the meantime, two further dates for your diary are Match vs South Wales Section, August 1 – St. Pierre Old Course, and the Christmas Tournament 2007 is December 12 at Burnham & Berrow.

Some good courses to look forward to in 2007. Let's have some info about your winter programmes, construction, maintenance, ecology etc.

Paul Worster

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SOUTH COAST

Welcome to the latest edition of news from the South Coast Section. I hope you are all coping really well with the winter thus far, although very mild mother nature does seem to be making up for recent droughts with lots and lots of rain. So, after you have cleaned the sheds and greased all the machines I hope you all have a good read of Greenkeeper International.

The main news this month is the advertising of the South Coast Seminar. Please make a note in your diary that this event will take place on Wednesday, March 14 at the same venue as last year – Canford Magna GC. These seminars, in past years, have proven to be very popular and go from strength to strength. This year will be no exception as Chris Bitten has arranged some magnificent people to talk on this day.

Eddie Seaward from the All England Tennis Club will give a fascinating insight into the turf maintenance at Wimbledon for the year. Those who have heard Eddie talk previously will know how good Eddie's talks always are.

Continuing the Groundsman theme, Peter Craig from The Hurlingham Club will present a talk on his management practices of both personnel and of turf at the Club. Peter manages up to 24 people and is responsible for 42 acres of high value Sports Areas, including croquet lawns, bowling greens, cricket squares, tennis courts and artificial surfaces. Peter is a true advocate of Groundsmen and Greenkeepers having close communication and equal respect and is a keen member of both BIGGA and the IOG.

Marcus White from Irriplan will be giving a presentation on the very important subject of water abstraction and licensing, the efficient storage of water and how to make the most use of this very valuable natural resource. We will also be welcoming Jerry Knox from Cranfield University.

The price for the day is yet to be confirmed, but will probably be in the same region as last years. South Coast members will be sent details of how to book as soon as all information is clarified. The Seminar is open to all BIGGA members and also any non-BIGGA members will be welcome to

attend. As soon as you receive details I strongly recommend booking promptly as this is a very popular event. For further details or any questions to be answered, please contact Chris Bitten on: 07796 887633 or email: chrisbitten@btinternet.com.

Finally, here is a reminder of this year's golf fixtures for the Section: Spring Tournament at Romsey GC – May 3; Summer Tournament at Andover GC – July 3 (Andover's Centenary Year); Autumn Tournament at North Hants GC – October 23; Turkey Trot TBA; The South West Match at Farringdon Gurney GC – September 13; The Scotts/BIGGA Management Trophy at Stoneham GC – May 31.

That's it for this month. Those of you who attended BTME, I hope that you had a good time, did lots of networking and not too much drinking!
Joe Crawley 07721 389200

DEVON & CORNWALL

I would like to start my report by congratulating our past National Chairman, none other than Richard Whyman, on his year in office. As you can imagine, our Section has a very high regard for Richard, as he is, to coin a phrase, a local lad. Having been the Section Secretary for years, we all knew he would give his heart and do a brilliant job as Chairman, and during his year of office he has been very forward thinking and has ensured that the Association is still moving forward. Talking to Richard recently, I know that he was very keen on encouraging younger members to join the Association, and indeed onto committees, this we have managed to do very successfully with very positive results, well done Richard.

On behalf of the Section I would like to wish Billy McMillan a very successful year as Chairman.

Okehampton GC was the venue for our Christmas party on December 12 last year and yet again it was a day to remember, in spite of very heavy rain the day before, the course was playable and all 18 holes were open. A big thank you to Richard Wisdon, the Head Greenkeeper and his staff for all their hard work in preparing the course in such good condition.

A huge thank you must also go to P J Flegg, the sponsor for the day, and especially Paul Watson the Sales Manager; Clive Ralph the local Sales Representative and Jo Turner from Jacobsen, who manned the hospitality tent on the course in their normal, efficient way. It is quite interesting to note that the course walkers seems to double for this meeting, I wonder why?

The results for the P J Flegg Trophy are as follows: 1. N O Sullivan and N Baggio, China Fleet GC, 42pts; 2. N Clark and T Blackman, Downs Crediton GC, 41 pts; 3. D Mouldin and S Kent from Bigbury GC, 40 pts.

After a fabulous Christmas dinner, we were entertained by Tank Sherman, a well known local comedian who kept us all entertained for the rest of the afternoon, this was followed by the Christmas draw. I would like to thank all the Trade, and members that supplied some 60 draw prizes and all the staff at Okehampton that made our day so special and enjoyable.

Last but by no means least, I would like to thank all the Trade that have sponsored the Section in 2006, without their support I am sure we would all struggle, and a special thanks to our President, John Palfrey of Avoncrop for supplying the wine on the table for lunch.

Donovan O Hunt

SOUTH WALES

The annual Winter Tournament sponsored by Vitax was held in traditional fashion at the Pyle & Kenfig GC, near Porthcawl recently. Despite some really awful weather of late we were lucky enough on the day to get away with it being blowy only to about gale 4 on the scale. Despite having experienced many inches of rainfall prior to the day, the course held up well and an enjoyable day was had by all. Just under 50 people took to the golf course, most finished and there was some great scores posted considering the conditions. Results: Winner of the Vitax Shield was Jamie Probert - Pontardawe GC, in second place was our Golf Team Captain - Andy Roach - Haverfordwest GC; Third place still on countback went to Daryl Bray - Morriston GC; Fourth place was local pommie bashing newcomer - Graham Blum - Trefloyne GC; Fifth place was Leigh (Gunky) Davies - Morriston GC.

Best Trade card went to Wyn (one round) Davies - representing Ted Hopkins Ltd and Guest Prize was claimed by Alex Webster from "Tower Sport Europe". Nearest the pins were claimed by: Nigel Ruck - Glynhir GC, Alan Pooley - Cradoc GC, Leigh Davies - Morriston GC, Daryl Bray - Morriston GC, The monster Drive of the day pipping Gareth Knight by 30 metres was Phil Sharpe. Winner of the Aggregate Shield (Best scores over the four seasonal competitions during 2006) was Peter Lacey - Pennard GC. Following the golf 53 people were treated to a super traditional Christmas Dinner, followed by the annual worlds longest raffle, although it was mentioned that it was the shortest to date and going in the right direction. A huge thank you to all of those who brought along a present/bottle and also to the trade who supported in abundance and assisted the raffle table too with donations of all kinds. The hospitality afforded us by the Pyle & Kenfig GC is superb and we can't thank them enough for allowing us to host this annual event at the club. We were fortunate to have with us as guests on the day our National Chairman, Richard Whyman and his lovely wife Denise, our Regional Administrator Jane Jones and while the opportunity arose a small token of our appreciation was made to them all. Also in attendance as our guests were Regional Chairman, Chris Sealey and IOG Chairman of Wales, Tony Horne, Vitax representative and Sponsor, John Mullins and P&K Deputy Course Manager, Paul Johnson.

Our sincere thanks to Vitax and their local distributors, Celtic Mowers for their ongoing support and sponsorship of the event, it is appreciated!

Unfortunately we are to lose another staunch supporter in Angus Macloed. Angus who has been involved on board our committee and represented our section on the National Board, is also Around the green scribe and has recently accepted the position of Course Manager at the De Vere Resort Belton Woods, taking over from Seamus Coogan. We are very sad to lose him, he has been incredibly pro-active and supportive while in South Wales and he'll leave a big hole to fill. However we wish him, his lovely wife Marie and daughter Erin well, but I won't miss his dog, have you seen him! Brody I think, I haven't been near enough to hear his name clearly, he's a monster. It's been a pleasure working with you Angus, you're very much the professional that we aspire to and you've taught us all so much, thanks! And keep in touch!

A happy and prosperous, disease and thatch free New Year to you all.

Please find below the "Winter Evening Lecture" series for 2007. Which for this year has been organised by the IOG. These evenings will be held at Pencoed College in the lounge bar and will commence at 7.30pm. For this series we have a new sponsor in Countrywide Turf & Amenity to whom we thank for their support and for taking up our invitation at short notice. The evenings are open to anyone interested and not just BIGGA and IOG members. Why not bring along a member of staff, your Secretary or Chairman of Green?

- Wednesday, January 17 - Neil Baldwin, Amega Sciences. "Stress management of turf during drought conditions."
- Wednesday, February 14 - Richard Beghin, Perma Enzyme. "The use of enzymes in turf management."
- Wednesday, March 7 - Iain Courage, Fleet Line Markers. "Paint and Line marking technology."
- Wednesday, April 11 - Field visit to the new Liberty Stadium - home of the Ospreys and Swansea City FC. A tour conducted by Head Groundsman Dan Duffy, with a buffet to follow.
- Thursday, April 26 - Annual Spring Seminar at the Royal Porthcawl GC. Details to follow shortly.

Our sincere thanks to all who give freely of their time and effort to ensure that this education series continues. To all speakers and participating companies, to Pencoed college, the IOG and Countrywide who support and sponsor this series of educational events. A single CPD credit can be claimed by those attending any/each of the above educational evenings.

For enquires or further information contact: P Lacey, Secretary. 31 Browns Drive, Pennard Swansea SA3 2AE or phone: 07812 369848 or email: biggasec@btinternet.com

P Lacey