



News from the Chief Executive

Welcome to 2007 and I wish all members of the Association a healthy and stress free year. The unsung heroes of 2006 were the volunteers who served on National, Region and Section committees and without whose devotion to duty the Association could not have functioned. The membership owe them a vote of thanks and I hope that as we move into a new year that they will receive the support they deserve and that others will come forward to help. At the AGM later this month there will also be changes to the Board structure. Bert Cross (Northern Region) and Iain Macloed (Scottish Region) will retire and will be replaced by Tony Smith and Archie Dunn. Bert and Iain have represented their Regions admirably and have each contributed to the ongoing success of BIGGA. The other changes include Kerran Daly who retires as Immediate Past Chairman and Kenny Mackay who becomes Vice Chairman elect. Last, but by no means least, I am sorry to learn that Walter Woods has decided not to seek re-election as a Guardian. Walter has been a stalwart supporter of BIGGA and its predecessor for more years than some can remember and his vision, wisdom and enthusiasm at meetings will be sadly missed. I wish Walter well for the future and would like to record my personal thanks to him for his support.

Harrogate Week will soon be upon us all and bookings for education are at record levels. The exhibition halls are fully sold and all we need now are the visitors. Remember that although golf is the central theme it's more than a golf show.

Here are some of the reasons why greenkeepers, groundsmen, golf club officials and buyers should attend:

- Specialist education programme, delivered by acknowledged leaders in their chosen field of expertise and covering a wide variety of topics
- Europe's leading turf and facility management exhibition
- Technical presentations and seminars by exhibitors
- Network with peers from all around the world
- Product launches by exhibitors, the R&A, the AGCS and BIGGA

Everyone should be well aware by now that some well known suppliers will be absent from Harrogate having chosen to realign their marketing strategy. We must not however, overlook the financial support that some of these have given to the Association's projects over the past year. Without their funds then we would not have had an Education and Development Fund, a Scholarship Scheme, an Environmental Competition, a competition for students, a chance for 10 greenkeepers each year to attend the GCSAA show, and so the list goes on. None of these help the Profit & Loss Account bottom line however it does mean that members enjoy benefits that the Association would otherwise not be able to afford.

Opportunities will arise in 2007 for the Association to broaden its horizons and I hope that members will carefully consider initiatives that may from time to time be put forward by the Board of Management. If the Association is to continue to develop the education and recognition for greenkeepers that is deserved then we must all look forward whilst building on the foundations laid down over the years.

Finally I look forward to welcoming Vanessa Depre to BIGGA House on January 15. Vanessa will take over the running of the membership office from Rachael Palmer who left just before Christmas.

John Pemberton

SCOTTISH REGION

CENTRAL

As I sit and write these notes, I'm getting ready for a Christmas night out with the lads. I'm looking forward to it, and dreading it at the same time. I hope when I read this in the January magazine it's with fond memories and not regrets. The good old Christmas Nights out are famous for our follies. I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas break, and on behalf of your committee, I wish you all the best for 2007.

I would like to welcome Nicholas Horsefield, Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Crail Golfing Society to the Section. I look forward to meeting you, Nicholas, at a future event.

The evening event with Richard Windows, the local STRI agronomist, saw 18 local members attending - a great turn out on such a very wet and dreary night. It was a very informative evening and we had the opportunity to discuss many topical issues, from sustainability, to frost policies. A good chat in the bar after also. There are many forthcoming events in the diary. Please check the website for further details. We would especially like to hear from greenkeepers who are new to the profession, to discuss what type of training or assistance you would like us to provide for you.

The AGM was the best attended for quite a few years, (28 members) and it was good to see so many taking an interest in the running of the Section.

The new committee is as follows: Derek Scott - Chairman, Euan Grant - Vice-Chairman, Andy O'Hara - Past Chairman, Andrew Mellon - Secretary/Treasurer, Archie Dunn - Board Member; Brian Heggie, Gordon McKie, and Alan Sharp - Greenkeeper Members, Kevin Brunton - Patron Member, and Jim Finlayson - Associate Member. I know that all of these guys will work to represent your best interests and are only too keen to hear from you with any matter you wish the committee to consider.

We have made arrangements for this year's spring and autumn tournaments.

Panmure GC will host the spring, and The Duke's, St Andrews the autumn. I have not played these courses myself yet, but have heard rave reviews from colleagues, and having looked at their splendid websites, I am really looking forward to what I'm sure will be very enjoyable events. We are very fortunate in the Section to have such wonderful courses who are willing to offer us courtesy of them.

Remember, the Association is here to help you, but also needs you to contribute, especially the seasoned experienced members, to enable us to help each other. We all face the same challenges, and I'm sure our combined experiences can help us deal with all of them.

All the best,
Andrew Mellon
Secretary

www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

EAST

I am writing this report at home, on Sunday, December 3. With conditions outside being horrendous I am prevented from getting my weekend fix of gardening. Oh well, roll on next weekend!

After many years loyal service Paul Black, Headman at Gogarburn is moving to the Elgin area. His wife Georgina is an English Teacher and Assistant Housemistress at Gordonstoun School, hence the move to pastures new. He commenced his greenkeeping career at the age of 19 at Murrayfield GC under the expert tutelage of Jimmy Neilson. In 1988 he

moved to Gogarburn to work for Headman Chris Yeaman before taking charge in 1990 on Chris's departure to Swanston GC. A keen cyclist, Paul has raced for many years for Edinburgh Racing Club, and in fact has been Edinburgh champion for the past 10 years. During this time he has also won five Scottish medals, and 8 East of Scotland gold medals. On behalf of the Section I would like to wish Paul and his wife best wishes for the future. I for one will miss his ready smile.

The new Headman at Gogarburn is Robert Marshall, who has worked for the last 10 years as Deputy to Stuart Cruikshank at Deer Park.

Approximately two months ago I had a meeting with David Swarbrick who is the General Manager at Blairgowrie GC. During our discussion he told me about a project he had been involved with at his previous club, Haddington GC in East Lothian. The following report on these works has been prepared by Head greenkeeper Norman Wood.

Haddington Golf Course is situated on the south shore of the River Tyne. A significant portion of the course is low lying and flooded regularly. This frequently closed the course for long periods, affecting revenue and management of the club. An environmental management plan for the club recommended the creation of ponds to provide wildlife habitat and alleviate flooding.

A specialist company, Watergems, was brought in by the club to design the ponds and lay out the levels, so that they blended into the three effected golf holes.

Johnny Rutherford Contractors who are based in Berwick-upon-Tweed dug out the ponds, and they did a first class job. In all three ponds were constructed each linked by an open ditch. A habitat of rough linked the ponds to the riverbank. Wildlife grassland was created around the ponds. There is now about one hectare of pond and wetland with grassland extending beyond this. Appropriate wetland plants were planted around the shallow edges of the ponds.

After two years swans and moorhens that are nesting in the ponds and wetland plants are colonising well. The ponds will provide a suitable habitat for water vole and great crested newt and a feeding ground for Pipistrelle bats.

Despite extremely heavy rain at times, the ponds have prevented the fairways flooding and the course has not had to close.

In all the total cost of the ponds was £10,000 most of which was sourced from funding given by East Lothian Council. The Council's Bio Diversity Officer, Stuart McPherson, was keen to see ponds close to the river to encourage the water vole, which is in decline. Throughout the project the greenstaff were heavily involved and derived a great deal of satisfaction from the end result.

The winners of the Patrons' Award were Keith Burgon of Berwick GC and Stuart Ferguson of Dundas Park GC. Their prize is a free trip to Harrogate.

The recent Stewarts Match between the East of Scotland and the North East Section was held on November 16 at Bamburg Castle GC. This event is now sponsored by Richard Aitken Seedsman. The course was in excellent condition and a credit to George Milliken and his team. The winners on the day were the East Section with a Score of 5 - 1.

It is hard to believe Harrogate 2007 is just around the corner with the week beginning Monday, January 22 being the key date for your diaries. This year we have our own stand (Thorntrees) 14D in Hall M, so my time is currently being spent planning for this. During the days of the show I would be delighted to speak to anybody who may have information, which can be used in this column.

Finally on behalf of the committee may I wish you all the compliments of the season.

Until next month

Don't work too hard

Mike Dooner

NORTH

I start the report for this month on a sad note. Tragically, Mark Main, apprentice Greenkeeper at Moray GC was killed in a road accident in Aberdeenshire in late November.

Mark was an up coming young Greenkeeper who would have gone on to do very well in the profession. He was a staunch supporter of the North Section of BIGGA and our thoughts are with his family at this very sad time. This has also come as a big shock to George Paterson and his team at Moray GC with whom Mark worked closely.

Paul Sharp has moved from Deeside GC to take up the Head Greenkeeper's position at Peterculter GC. We wish you well, Paul, and I'm sure you will make a success of the job. Also on the move is Neil Sadler, from Inchmarlo GC, who has taken up the Course Manager's position at Portlethen GC and we wish him well for the future.

One new member this month is William Forsyth, from Insh GC.

Dale Robertson, Hugh McClatchie and John Geddes attended the Patrons' Dinner in Stirling recently. Ben Brookes and Steve Sullivan were the Patron winners this year so they also attended the dinner and also won a trip to Harrogate in January for BTME.

There are some alterations being made at Cruden Bay GC on the 14th hole where the approach to the green is being lowered and the bunkering re-done to give a better perspective to the 2nd shot and the appearance of the hole in general. Hamish and his staff are doing most of the work with only the major earth moving work done by contractor. Mind you Hamish I'm surprised you've employed someone from the other side of town to keep the work GREEN. (Just joking in case I offend anyone)

Harrogate will be the main topic on the agenda for most greenkeepers this month. I'm sure it will be a good show as always but it will be interesting to see if there is any difference in the numbers without J/Deere and Toro being present.

The weather continues to be very mild for this time of year although the west coast and central belt are getting hit by a lot of heavy rain. Gleneagles got 180mm in November; in Aberdeen we only got 57mm as a comparison.

Not much more from me so enjoy Harrogate and all that comes with it.
R N Patterson, Royal Aberdeen Golf Club

WEST

Welcome to another Wet West Section report - I wonder when the rain is going to stop. I had said in my last report matters brought up at our AGM, one being handicapping at golf tournaments will be looked at our spring outing and changes will be made if necessary.

The other point was input in the magazine and now that I'm finished as West Section Chairman I will have more time to do the report but as I've said in the past it's not easy writing a report with little input from the members.

If anyone has information and wants to use the magazine to get their point across then please get in touch and I'll do my best to include it.

Information on trainees attending college in the Section: Langside College have 16 NC students, 3 HNC students, SVQ levels 1/2/3 - 32 students; Gosta Training has 67 SVQ level 2 students, 62 level 3 students, no level 4.

If anyone is interested in finding out more information on education you can contact the colleges direct or the GTC.

There is also funding from the association for many training courses, you can contact Gavin Jarvis for further information.

On other fronts we played the Clubmasters in our annual match at the start of November. It was an extremely close match with the Clubmasters winning 4-2, and was a very enjoyable day. I must congratulate Brain Bolan and his team for the condition of the course - it was first class, especially for the time of year. I would like to thank Gary Smith, from

Scotts, for sponsoring the day's event and for their continued support to the Section.

Hopefully Dougie can lead his team out next year to a glorious victory.

Golf outings - our autumn outing next year will be at the Vale of Leven, which will be a great day as it's their centenary year.

We also have a few courses lined up but if there are any Greenkeepers willing to propose their course for future outings we will gladly accept.

New member this month is Ian Craig, Elderslie GC. Welcome to the Section.

Our annual night out was held at the studio on Saturday, November 25, and it turned out to be a very good night with good entertainment and good food.

It was very disappointing on the turnout as there were only 24 tickets sold, I would like to thank Gordon Howat for the hard work he put in trying to sell the tickets and hopefully next year more members will attend.

By the time you have read this report Harrogate will be on the horizon, hopefully it will be a big success as usual.

I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2007. If you have any information or stories please get in contact: 07970366355
Fraser Ross

NORTHERN REGION

NORTH WEST

Well, the start of another year and time to lose a bit of the spare tyre. It has been a quiet month so far, not much to report except that this year one of the North West Section events will take place at Silloth GC, I have heard so much about this course and hope to play - It will be nice to meet some of the lads from the area and I hope we get a good turnout.

Now to bang the drum, Harrogate is fast approaching and the Section committee would encourage you to attend especially this year, so let's make it a great show. By the way there is a Park and Ride scheme in operation this year and it will not cost you a penny - Details are in the magazine or you can get more information from the BIGGA website so please take advantage of it. I keep saying this in the hope that someone will contact me besides my roving reporter but here goes, 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.

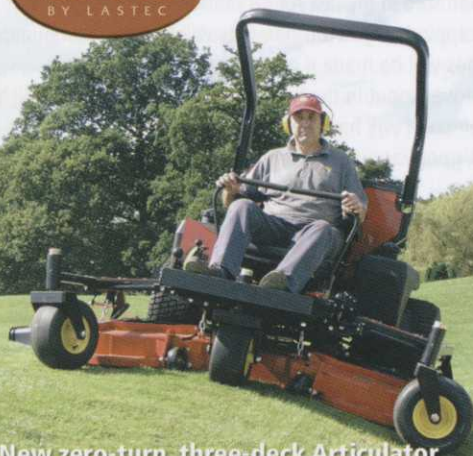
Chris Sheehan

CLEVELAND

Well done to the Section's 7-a-side football team who were runners-up in the TSL tournament. Pembo's boys lost in the final to the Boro Groundstaff. The side was Ian Pemberton, Bedale GC; Barry Walker, City of

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Newcastle GC; Martin Woods, Bedlington GC; Anthony McGeough, Richmond GC; Ian Dunnabie, Dinsdale Spa GC, and Phil Hargrave and Colin Spence, both of Crook GC. A good day was had by all and the lads would like to thank Allan Morton for arranging the day and the food. Also, many thanks to Tony Bell (MVP winner) and Middlesbrough Football Club for organising this great indoor venue for the competition.

Quite a few of the Section members attended the annual Greenkeepers v Groundsman Quiz at Mount Oswald GC on December 6. Again we were runners-up losing by 10 points. If only good OLD Kevin Heslop, of Brancepeth Castle GC, could have made it, we might have nicked it. MENSA member Kev was attending his 50th birthday party instead. His First Assistant, Andrew Welsh, informed me that there were plenty of banners and posters displayed around the course and the clubhouse just to remind Kevin that he is now, officially an 'OLD GIT'. His brains and wit were sorely missed. Happy Birthday Kev!

The Section AGM held at Dinsdale Spa GC in November was very poorly attended with only eight members there. Needless to say, the main topic under discussion was how to get better turnouts at all types of functions. The committee certainly has a job on their hands to try and get members interested. This is your Section and your Association. If everyone showed this lack of interest we wouldn't have BIGGA, then the free golf would cease! Please put in some effort to support all aspects of the Section events.

I hope the festive season was kind to you and yours - I hope your waistlines haven't increased too much.

I look forward to meeting many of you at BTME. The TSL bus will be going on the Wednesday as usual. If you would like to go, please book your places with Karen in the Turfcare office on: 01207 505837. Pick up points are, as usual Morpeth GC, City of Newcastle GC, Chester-le-Street GC and finally the old 'Cock of the North' site on the A 167.

All the best

Any news to TC on; 07831 214879

Terry El Prez Charlton

MIDLAND REGION

EAST MIDLAND

Our Section AGM took place on November 1 at Scraftoft GC and Nigel White and his staff presented the course in immaculate condition. The format of the day was a Texas Scramble consisting of teams of three and the results were 1st - A De Wet, R McCarthy, G Thurman - 61.8 Nett; 2nd - P Frith, T Allard, S Raybould 62.8 Nett; 3rd - D Leatherland, D Smith, R Duval 62.8 Nett. The Section AGM took place after the golf and the following were elected, T. Allard (Chairman), S. Raybould (Vice Chairman), D. J. Rodgers (Secretary) N. White (Treasurer) also, the following were elected as committee members - A. Marsh, C. Watt, N. Miles, A. English, D. Leatherland and S. Donoghue. The Christmas tournament took place on December 7 at Charnwood Forest GC and was played in high winds and bursts of heavy rain, the course was presented in excellent condition for the time of year and Tim Allard and his staff deserve great credit for presenting a playable course after a night of heavy rain. The format for the day was a Pairs Betterball and was won by S. Raybould and A. Bindley with 43 points, followed by S. Donoghue & I. Abrahams, 41 points, and 3rd was A. English and R. Barker 40 points. The Longest Drive was won by N. Couey and Nearest the Pin by I. Abrahams. Our main sponsor for the day was Rigby Taylor and we would like to thank Steve Dickinson for attending in place of Carl Chamberlain, who unfortunately was unavailable, and helping to present the winners prizes.

Dan Rodgers

MIDLAND

Firstly may I wish all a Happy New Year on behalf of the Section's Committee. Hopefully by the time you read these notes you will have received our Section's Calendar. If you have not please be patient, due to the high cost of postage we are going to hand deliver as many as possible to your work place, obviously utilising our ever suffering Reps. If you haven't received yours by January, please let me know via the Section's email address: sean.mcdade@homecall.co.uk or the bat phone: 07908421015. When using this phone number, please leave a short message. I receive many cold calls to which, if I do not recognise the number I generally will not answer. However, I certainly do not wish to shun you fine Members. Your call is of great importance to me and I shall ring you back (no cost to you!), when I have a coffee and can hear you clearly. Honest, I also work for a living. You can stop laughing now! I would like to thank our postage sponsor Mr P. McCrannor and this month's calendar page sponsor, Osprey Irrigation. Thanks to Jon Jinks and everybody at Osprey for their continued and valued support. I am hopeful that we shall be able to produce a calendar for 2008 by the grace of our fine sponsors. So, fair warning, we need photos of your track, get those cameras clicking folks and email me with your pictures.

Since my appointment as Secretary I have tried to introduce other events rather than golf orientated, such has generally been well supported and a great success. Perhaps of greater importance has been the wonderful education seminars hosted at Gay Hill GC as per our Education Coordinator, Mr P. Woodham. Paul is not a fan of self-gratification and he will kill me for such lines. However, his efforts must be recognised and thanked for. Sorry mate, but you deserve such. From the Section as a whole, our gratitude for your fine works, and of course to Gay Hill GC for their kind use of its wonderful facilities is most defiantly in order. Further more, thanks to all of the delegates who supported our training crusades during 2006. The Regional Seminar was a fantastic event and we have had nothing but positive feedback. I think we have proved that we can access great training and host events that are both original and productive. Please let me know if you have any training requirements that we can assist with. They're maybe others out there who share your needs. There are still places available for Lantra sit-in ATV training at Gay Hill GC on February 20, 2007, please give me a call or Sami at HQ to reserve your place.

Sean McDade

BB&O

Another year is over - Happy New Year to you all. The jolly season of 2006 has passed and the nativity plays and panto's are now just a faded memory. Father Christmas has put on another stone - eating mince pie after mince pie with a Turkey sandwich and Sudoku puzzle to keep him occupied during tea break and a glass of homemade sherry in the evenings to soothe memories of last year's resolutions which bit the dust. Welcome to 2007.

The Christmas Turkey Trot got off to a good start! On a mild winter's morning in November the BB&O Section had the pleasure of visiting Royal Ascot GC, which was founded in 1887 and, for 117 years, was situated in the centre of Royal Ascot Racecourse and surrounded by Ascot Heath. Due to the expansion and development of Royal Ascot Race Course, construction of a new golf course and clubhouse was started in January 2004 approximately half a mile from the old course and within the ancient confines of Windsor Forest.

Course Manager, Alistair Holehouse, gave a warm welcome to the Section members who were delighted to take part in the day's events and relished the challenge to play this new 18 hole championship course beautifully carved into Crown land where deer and wild boar had once roamed freely only challenged by the Royal gamekeeper of the day.

A record turnout of 83 was recorded to battle it out for The Avoncrop



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Cup in Texas scramble format, followed by a roast dinner and AGM. Joe Crawley from Avoncrop presented the prizes and the results were as follows: Steve Gardner from Flackwell Heath GC bludgeoned The Long Drive and Lucky Mick from Calcott Park GC jammed Nearest the Pin.

1st Place went to Gazza Tait and Clive the Gem, 2nd place to the Newcastle Nights from Calcott Park GC and 3rd to The Magic Pencil and his team from Southfield GC.

A big thank you goes to Sheila Thompson and catering staff for co-ordinating this excellent venue and to Royal Ascot GC for the courtesy of the course and for providing the Section with fantastic facilities.

A big thank you to Alistair Holehouse and his team of staff for preparing the course to a first class standard and ensuring we all had a great day out.

Thank you to all our sponsors throughout 2006. We have had great support from the trade, which has included Scotts, Sheriff, Avoncrop, Tacit, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Turner Groundcare, Golf & Turf, Ely, Browns, Gem Professional, Headland and Banks Amenity.

The Annual General Meeting followed and Sid Arrowsmith was re-elected as Chairman for the Section followed by Dean Jones (Secretary), Frank Booth (Treasurer), Alistair Higgs (Handicap Secretary) Alec MacEndoe (Education) and Gareth Acteson, Matt Smith and Dan Lightfoot as committee helpers with yours truly as the scribe for another year.

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 only be pleased to keep you informed and up to date. Dean can be contacted at:

d.jones51@tiscali.co.uk

See you all at BTME in a few weeks time and wishing you all a great start to the New Year!

Mark Day
 mark@day.fm

A message from your BB&O Chairman!

Dear Member, I trust that you all had a pleasant Christmas and a wonderful New Year- Good Luck to you during 2007 on your Golf Courses.

As you are all well aware during 2006 we had some wonderful Golf days for our Section members resulting in a record turnout for the November Turkey Trot at Royal Ascot GC, thanks must therefore go to your committee for their planning and organisation, a very big thanks to all our sponsors for their generous contributions.

During 2006 we saw some important committee changes take place when Frank Booth became treasurer and Dean Jones became Section Secretary, I am sure that they are well prepared for the challenges ahead and I wish them every success.

John Scoones who held the post of Secretary for several years decided to step down prior to the AGM in November and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him on behalf of the Section for all his dedicated work that he has accomplished for the Section during his term of office.

Mitch Stewart who was the previous treasurer stepped down earlier in the year and once again a well-deserved vote of thanks to him from the Section for all his work during his term of office.

As with all new personnel taking up such important roles comes new enthusiasm and creative ideas. Dean and Frank are demonstrating these qualities already and we can therefore all look forward to continued success throughout the section, building further upon the solid foundation that has been laid down before them.

Sid Arrowsmith MG

MID ANGLIA

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and are all looking forward to the coming year.

My first port of call is the autumn competition at Northants County GC, where after a foggy start, we had an excellent day. Thanks go to David Low and his team for their work on the course, the caterers for the fine fare and not forgetting the Golf Club for allowing us courtesy for the day.

The main sponsor for the day was Seoul Nassau, thanks to Dave Murphy and Rob Catlin for the prizes.

The results were as follows, 1st G. Boulton, 37pts; 2nd M. Turbayn, 36pts and 3rd S. Cherry 34pts; Nearest the Pin, F. Whittle and Longest Drive, K. Armstrong.

The AGM was also held and there was no change in the committee, but we are going to be looking for one more person to join us, so if you would like to do your bit for the Section, give us a call.

Moving on to the Christmas competition at Brocket Hall and thanks to John Wells for accommodating us at such short notice. Thanks also to John Moorhouse and his team for all the hard work they put in to the course in such difficult conditions. The caterers did a splendid job with the turkey dinner and we were escaped very lightly with the weather, it could've been a lot worse.

Thanks to Avoncrop, and Barry McCloskey, for sponsoring the day and despite the conditions there were some good scores that came in.

In 1st Buckingham GC, 58.1; 2nd Brickendon Grange 58.4 and 3rd Seoul Nassau/Banks 58.5. Nearest the pin was M. Rees and Longest Drive, which earned quite a few air miles on its way down the 10th, was won by D. Housden.

G. Boulton won the Player of the Year Trophy and he receives £250 worth of vouchers for his troubles. Well done Gooner and thanks to Turner Groundscare for sponsoring the trophy.

This year's events will be as follows, spring - East Herts, summer - Welwyn Garden City, autumn - Berkhamsted and Christmas - South Beds. Dates are still to be finalised but you will know in good time.

In the coming months John Deere would like to hold an informative day at their Nottingham factory. Anyone interested should contact the committee.

Health and Safety advisor John Albutt will be giving an update at Dunstable Downs on February 6 at 2pm. These forums are very informative so please try to make the effort to attend.

Congratulations to Vice-Chairman, John Gubb, and his wife for the arrival of their baby boy, all the best for the future and finally congratulations go to Richard Saunders who has been promoted to Head Greenkeeper at Mowsbury GC in Bedford.

Steve Mason



SURREY

Friday, December 1. It's dull and miserable outside and the rain seems to have fallen heavily on most days making the ground on many courses waterlogged and difficult to maintain. But nevermind, Christmas is only a few weeks away but by the time you read this Christmas and New Year will have come and gone. So, Happy New Year to all my readers and as we have said goodbye to the shortest day, spring must just be around the corner.

My New Year's resolution is to try and keep my monthly meanderings gay and entertaining, so I'm not going to mention John Ross or his whistle ever again. I am going to rely solely on you Surrey members to keep me



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informed of interesting and repeatable happenings in your lives in and out of working hours. I would especially like to hear about how you have spent your time at Harrogate and how you have benefited from the excellent educational seminars and workshops available at BTME. Any reminiscences about that place up the hill can only be reported on if they can be verified with photographic evidence.

Tuesday, November 14. Hankley Common GC was the venue for the Surrey England vs Scotland golf match. A warm sunny autumnal day welcomed the 12 a side teams for this annual cultural get together. England, having been the last winners followed by some four years of the match being halved, were anxious, the determined Scots had picked a very strong side that did not include John Ross. Blast! There goes my New Year's resolution. Most games were close except for one English team, myself and Gary Rowe who were up against an in form Shaun (Pancho) Sturret and Ian McMillan. We were beaten 5&4 with Pancho, sorry Shaun, playing to par after 14 holes. Fortunately, after five games, Scotland three England two, the final English pair were victorious and once again the match was halved and the trophy remains in English hands.

Addington Court GC was the venue for the AGM and Winter Tournament sponsored by Avoncrop. Although we had had heavy rain during the night and just before the start, the course was well presented and a credit to Neil Carter and his greenkeepers. The results were: 1. Tony Brennan, 42pts; 2. David Guy, 39pts; 3. Andy Gatland, 37pts; 4. Jason Hunt, 35pts. Longest drive was Billy McMillan and Nearest the Pin, Ian Beale. The longest walk went to Brian (I can't believe it) Willmott.

The AGM followed the golf and with no written issues being raised and the existing committee being re-elected the meeting was concluded very efficiently by our able Chairman, Anthony (Kojak) Freeman.

Congratulations to Jon Day and his wife Abby on the birth of their daughter, Anya - 8lbs 3ozs, on October 26. By the time they read this Anya will be already playing with the train set daddy bought her for Christmas.

Brian Willmott.

KENT

Happy New Year!

A bumper edition of your favourite column this month to start the year off in style!

Firstly our Turkey Trot event held at Birchwood Park. Many months of intense preparation for this prestigious tournament were very nearly totally wiped out by a violent thunderstorm at four o'clock on the very morning of the event. The course held up extremely well, however, and 30 of us proceeded to the 1st tee. We were greeted by a member of the local press who took photos and tried to gain some tips for his readers. Unfortunately for him though we were also greeted on the tee by Rob Hayward, from Ernest Doe's, who was dispensing some warming scotch from his refreshment wagon causing some very erratic opening drives!

The sun broke through after the first couple of holes and we were all able to enjoy the course that much more as a result. A second visit to Rob's whisky wagon at the 10th tee, however, became the undoing of many a fine score on the opening nine, causing many a card-wrecking score on the tricky Birchwood closing stretch. Scores on the day were very close with a countback being necessary to separate the leaders at the end.

Results were as follows: 1st place and winner of The Scotts Shield - Adam Marrable, from Chislehurst, 41 pts; 2nd Place, also on 41 pts was Joseph Horlock, from Lullingstone GC; 3rd Place on 37 pts was Michael Wigstone, from Tenterden, and Trade prize went to Brian Willmott on 37 pts.

The prize giving followed a great Christmas dinner served up by the lovely Birchwood girls which everyone enjoyed. After dinner, Kent Section had its AGM and despite relatively few attendees, a lively debate on how best to serve our members in the future ensued. More details on that in

future editions of this column. One thing I can tell you about now is our website is currently being upgraded and should be up and running soon in all its glory. Your current committee members are remaining as we are with two additions, Glenn Kirby, of the London Club, and Andrew Wood, of Avoncrop Amenity, have both joined the ranks to help us do our best for everyone in the county.

A few thank yous to round off what was a great day at Birchwood. Thanks again to Rob Hayward and Ernest Doe & Sons for the on-course refreshments, thanks also to the Scott's company and Gem Professional for providing prizes in the evening and last but not least, to Birchwood Park management for allowing us courtesy of the course and to my staff for working so hard to produce such a great course all year round. Unfortunately, this was the last big event one of my guys will be helping us out with, Dan Waghorn is moving down the road to The London Club. Best of luck mate, just don't forget to set your alarm!

Onto our next event. Kent Section football team took on their Sussex counterparts in a hotly contested re-match after the Sussex boys narrow 4-3 victory last year at Brighton. Set deep in the heart of deliverance country, Corinthians club played host to what was billed to be the game of the century. Unfortunately, the Kentish defensive line must have got confused because although the directive to maintain a line against Sussex seems straightforward enough, they decided to hold their line somewhere in Sussex leaving the brave goalkeeper at the mercy of the whole of the Sussex team. Things went from bad to worse in the second half when our midfield seemed to get lost in some kind of Bermuda Triangle, again, leaving the poor keeper absolutely helpless. The referee took pity on Kent though and blew the whistle on this largely one-sided affair a tad early before the visitors could reach double figures!

For future fixtures I am aiming to introduce a handicap system similar to what we would have, were this a golfing event. All opposition team members team wishing to play us from now on must wear two left boots and a Millwall strip to even things up!

Seriously though, thanks to Kev Morris for organising the evening, to Collier Turf Care for providing a few footballs and to the Sussex team for the humiliation!

That's all for now.

Happy New Year one and all

Rob Holland

SUSSEX

Our football team played Kent on November 29 at the Corinthians Club. I would like to thank Kevin Morris and Andrew Wood for arranging the game and also thank Kent for their hospitality. The game ended 9-0 to us, which I felt was a bit flattering to us, but stands us in good stead for our next game against Surrey on December 21. Anyone interested in representing Sussex in the future, please contact me on the below number.

Moving on to golf. Our Xmas golf day was held at Littlehampton GC. It was a very wet start to the day but did brighten up quickly. I would like to thank Littlehampton GC for entertaining us for the day and looking after us. Thanks to Dave Wood and his greenstaff team for getting the course ready and playable for us.

The results from the Turkey Trot are as follows: Nearest the Pin on the 3rd - Jon Sollwood, 6th - Tony Stone, 8th - Iain McLeod (hole-in-one), 11th - Peter Day, 16th - Simon (talk a good game) McCarthy, Longest Drive - Ian Semple and quickest exit from a golf club - Iain McLeod (can't think why, and they say the Scots are tight?)

The final positions of the Turkey Trot were: Mark Reid, Kevin, Jon Budd - 13th, 49pts; Dave Haskell, Mark Wilton, Jeff Yelland, Peter Ray - 12th, 52pts; Paul Bell, Russell Eales, Steven Eales - 11th, 52pts; Ian Semple, Derek Farrington, Tony Engelfield, Dave Ansell - 10th, 53; Rob Hudson, Si McCarthy, Paul Dunbar, Mike Ring - 9th, 54; George Barr, Nigel Baillie, Ian

Evans, Eddie Docherty - 8th, 55pts; John Hill, Jim Russell, John Payne, Les Shrub - 7th, 55pts; Gary Ogilvie, Chris Allen, John Sellwood, David Hinks - 6th, 57pts; Andy Paynter, Rob Sabbage, Chuck Sutton, Damian Roberts - 5th, 58pts; Iain McLeod, Chris Watters, Bob Watters, Tony Stone - 4th, 60pts; Brian Wilmot, Anthony Freeman, Gary Rowe - 3rd, 61pts; Dave Allen, Chris Ahier, Dan Beard, Sam Lake - 2nd, 62pts and Matt Crossley, Peter Crossley, Glen Scott, Paul Scott (best back) - 1st, 62pts.

Congratulations to the winning father and son side and a big thank you to the sponsors of the day, which were Avoncrop. Thanks to Gary for sorting the prizes out.

Harrogate is coming up soon. There are 10 places available for one free nights accommodation at Harrogate to the value of £50. This offer is open to first time attendants from Deputy Course Managers to Assistants, so if you have not been and would like to please contact me on: 07776223234 or email: robert.hudson77@btinternet.com

We did have our AGM in early November and I am embarrassed to say that only eight attended. This Section exists to provide for you guys and some time you have to put a bit back. I don't think it would be too much to ask to give an hour of your time so we can keep this Section going.

Good luck to Matt Crossley and his wife who are expecting their first baby very soon.

I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a great new year.

All the best,
Rob Hudson

LONDON

The London Section of BIGGA is going from strength to strength, with the December Texas Scramble attracting 53 players. The number may not sound much compared with some of the other Sections that I support but this Section was on its knees three years ago. The winners were the Northwood GC team for the second year running - David Leach, Wesley Walker and Paul Simpson. The day also saw Sam Brennan of Old Fold Manor GC achieve a hole-in-one on the 9th.

Michael Fance



SOUTH WEST

A very Happy New Year and very best wishes to all. My apologies for not being very active at the meetings last year; my New Year's resolution is to try much harder. Our lake and irrigation should be up and running soon and I'll have next to nothing to do after that. So plenty of time to play golf and relax in the sun! No, probably not. Shoulder might even be 100% by then as well.

There is another addition to the fixture list - Match vs the Secretaries is at Henbury GC on June 14. Other fixtures are as below, and as reported last month. Thanks very much to all the clubs who are hosting fixtures this year, and thanks to all those who helped arrange them. If you're interested in representing the Section Team - (three out of three in 2006) give Wayne "no pressure" Vincent a ring. I'll also look forward to the first meeting at Stockwood with Roger Davey's lecture on Water Use.

Stockwood Vale - February 22. Winter comp + Roger Davey lecture on Water Use; Cotswold Hills - April 25 - Spring Tournament; Enmore Park - May 17 - Greenkeeper Amateur; Race Night - June - (date from Jon Jarvis); Henbury - June 14 - Match vs Secretaries; Cumberwell Park - July 25 - Summer Tournament + Marc Haring quiz night; Farrington Gurney - September 13 - Match vs South Coast; Minchinhampton New - October 11

- AGM.

The Regional Seminar at Cannington was a great success with good attendance. Environment and sustainability issues are never far from the public mind these days, so many thanks and congratulations to Jane Jones, Chris Sealey, and the Regional Board for putting so much into it. Chris, I always think is a very un-sung hero. Apart from his full time job as Course Manager at Chippenham GC, he is Chairman of the Section Committee, and also Chairman of the Regional Board. He has recently been helping Nobby through his career change, by running all the invites for the Section events last year. Chris, modest as ever, wanted me to thank Bob Cook in the Chippenham office for his assistance. He also asked me to thank the Devon & Cornwall Section for the kind invitations to send delegates to their recent meeting at Lyme Regis.

The rain of November/December caused more than a few problems, certainly with any construction work. Our lake is obviously the self-filling variety, as the guys who tried to line it discovered. Just one night's rain put six inches of water into the lower end so now they're staggering about trying to put the secondary layers of material down without drowning in the process. I'll try and put a full article together when the work is finished, as it really is a most interesting subject.

Talking about weather, today December 7 has seen terrific thunderstorms, hailstorms, gale force winds. We had a beech tree struck by lightning (about 50 seniors came scuttling out from under the next one and ran for their lives), and a poor elderly gentleman was literally blown off his feet in the car park and ended up in the box hedge. Roll on Spring.

And finally, I bought a new car the other day. Well, for my wife actually. A Citroen C1 - a little upturned corrugated pram on wheels - (only the French could build a car like that - and sell it to us). Still, only £40 road tax, group one insurance, and 65 miles to the gallon. Not too shabby, although there was a little problem with one of the hubcaps. Obviously well loose, it fell off before we had a chance to drive off the garage forecourt. "Not to worry" cried the sales-lady (still with one eye on my cheque book) "just take a seat, one of our specially Citroen-trained technicians will take it round to the workshop and repair it." With that, a greasy, disinterested looking youth came slouching round and roared (well chugged) off round the back with our new car. Mooching around the showroom, surrounded by gleaming new cars, plush armchairs, the latest in interactive sales equipment, I was somewhat amused to notice a CCTV screen showing what could best be described as a wooden shack round the back with Francois or whatever his name was, using a sledgehammer and a scaffolding pole to tap my hub-cap back on. However, we drove home and it didn't fall off again - not until we got back to Cirencester that is. A couple of weeks later, the after-sales experience started with an annoying phone call just as I'd nodded off after tea one evening. Here's how the conversation went with me getting progressively more irritated. "Just a couple of quick questions M'sieur - how was your overall sales experience?" - Not bad, although there was a small problem with one of the hubcaps. Was the car perfectly clean inside and out when you collected it? "Yes, apart from one of the hubcaps." Would you like our enhanced exterior and interior paint protection package? "No, only for the hubcaps." Were you offered our standard extras and upgrades? "Yes, but not a new hubcap." Were you tempted to take out our additional insurance package? "No, not even on the hubcaps." The final question, having been totally oblivious to my previous responses - were there any problems with the car, and would you recommend us to a friend? "Yes, but only one with his own hubcaps."

Never mind.

Look forward to meeting up at Harrogate, and I could do with some proper news material. The Patronage Partner-sponsored places for the accommodation and seminars will have been awarded, so may I, on your behalf, thank all our Patronage Partners for their continued support and

generosity.

Paul Worster

01453 837355 or: paulw@mgcnew.co.uk

SOUTH COAST

Last year our Section was so blessed with good weather for our golf days and our trip to Weybrook Park for our Turkey Trot on Wednesday, December 6 was no exception. When having breakfast that morning, like most of you, I watched with anticipation the weather forecast for the day. The summary was that the conditions for our tournament would be the calm before the storm! As I write this outside is rain and lightening.

Richard Dalmas, the Course Manager, and his team, did an exceptional job with the presentation of the golf course, well done lads. It was very pleasing to see that so many were able to travel from far corners of our Section - from Poole and Bournemouth, and in particular to Nick Reynolds travelling from Weymouth. This journey was worth the effort as Nick won 1st prize in division one with 41 points. Other scores were as follows: 1.2 Stephen Finlay, 37 pts; 2.1 Alan Ridout, 38 pts; 2.2 Spencer Haines, 38 pts; 3.1 Chris Pink, 38 pts (well done Chris on your first outing with us, hope you continue to play in the Section); 3.2 Trevor Blyth, 30 pts. Longest Drive - Rob Patrick, Nearest The Pin - Mark Davies and The Veterans Cup - technically won by Alan Ridout but Alan already had a handful of prizes, so congratulations to Joe Newman with 34 pts.

Our sincere thanks to our sponsors for the day Seoul Nassau (Sheerwater) & New Forest Farm Machinery. Our gratitude also goes to all the staff at Weybrook Park GC, in particular the catering and bar staff for providing very friendly, excellent service and a wonderful Christmas dinner and pud!

Also in attendance was Peter Marsh. As many of you know, Peter retired recently from Stoneham GC. Peter started work at Stoneham on April 19, 1959. What a tremendous innings! We wish Peter and his wife Muriel all the very best for the future and hope to continue to see him at our future events.

The planning and organisation for the South Coast Seminar is well under way. Chris Bitten is doing a tremendous job constructing the day. The Seminar will take place at Canford Magna GC sometime in March, 2007. As soon as the exact details are known we will contact you with more information. This event in the last few years has been very popular and this year's seems to be no exception as Chris has enlisted some very high profile speakers including Peter Craig, from the Hurlingham Club, and Eddie Seawood, from the All England Tennis Club (Wimbledon).

For future payments for golf days you can send your cheques prior to the event date directly to Chris Sturgess at his home address: 31 Bay Road, Sholing, Southampton, SO19 8EZ. This will be most helpful to Chris and the Section and will make the event run more smoothly on the day.

Finally, I hope you all got what you wanted for Christmas and on behalf of the South Coast Section, I would like to wish you all a very happy and successful year.

Joe Crawley

DEVON & CORNWALL

On Tuesday, November 14, 2006, our Section held its second meeting of the season at Lyme Regis GC, Dorset - kindly sponsored by Alan Dommatt, of Devon Garden Machinery. The reason for choosing the venue was because of the support that Head Greenkeeper, Dave Everett, has given us in the past, so we thought, although not in our area, it would be appropriate to support David.

An invitation was sent to Chris Sealey from the South West Section, who brought along some of his members. The day turned out to be a great success, so much so that we will endeavour to have more inter-section activity in the future.

Unfortunately the weather was not very kind - thick fog and very damp with a heavy drizzle. Dave was never very far from the klaxon to call the golf off but thank heavens the fog did eventually clear so we could all see the hard work Dave and his staff had put in to present the course in excellent condition.

The non-golfers went on a course walk led by David, to see some of the problems that have occurred over the past years, re: Coastal erosion, after a two hour hike around the course, the members arrived back at the clubhouse rather wet and thirsty.

The morning's golf competition was a Greensomes and the winners were as follows: 1. J. Mills and S. Saunders, 37pts; 2. C. Sealey and W. Vincent, 36pts; 3. A. Crosswood and A. Dunstan, 34pts.

After a superb lunch Alan Dommatt presented some excellent prizes to the competition winners.

The afternoon educational speaker was given by Martyn T. Jones and what an excellent presentation it was. All our members were thrilled and not one nodded off - Martyn was still answering questions late into the afternoon - many thanks Martyn for driving down from Preston.

Please make a note in your diary for the following meetings in 2007.

First Aid Course, Portmore GC, Wednesday, February 21; First Aid Course, Trethorne GC, Thursday, February 22 - 10 delegates minimum, maximum 20, details to follow.

A workshop will be held on March 7 at Trethorne GC - construction and drainage being the main topic.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all members a healthy and trouble free 2007.

Donovan O Hunt

SOUTH WALES

The Rigby Taylor Matchplay Finals were held at the Royal Porthcawl GC on a glorious November morning and never have I known such benign conditions at this wonderful links. It was a glorious day; no wind and shirtsleeves were worn all day. Our thanks to the club for allowing us the use of their facilities for the day, to Course Manager David Ward and his team for the course was in splendid condition, the best we've ever seen it! (Sustainable Golf Course Management in Practice), and to David Carvey, Roy Barker and Peter Griffiths, from RT, whose hospitality is second to none and who ensured all those in attendance had an enjoyable day. To the finalists Gary Humphries and Rhys McDonagh, from the Llanwern GC, Newport, who were cheered on throughout the day by their Lady Captain, her husband and former club Captain and their Chairman of Green.

It was great to see such support from the club present on the day; however, Jake Waites and Robin Cheyney, from the Celtic Manor Resort, were not fazed by this splendid support. For they started off like greyhounds and were four up after six holes, from the 7th hole Gary got his driver firing and by the turn him and Rees were only two down. Jake and Robin however, gelled together more favourably than their well supported colleagues and won on the 17th hole amid failing light. An altogether enjoyable day and evening courtesy of Rigby Taylor. The Rosebowl was presented in the clubhouse to the winning partnership amid the after match celebrations and after having their names engraved upon the silverware will be returned to them in the very near future, well done lads.

As a result of some recent changes in sponsorships, some of which was confirmed at our AGM last month, I have the following to report.

Avoncrop Amenity Products, long time sponsors of our Winter Evening Lecture Series have decided not to continue with this sponsorship, stating that they wish to "channel resources into Road Shows". We thank them for their past support, two alternative companies have shown an interest in the series and confirmation will be reported in next months article.

"Tower Chemicals" have confirmed that they will commit to long term

sponsorship of the annual Spring Tournament, which, next year, will be held at the Coed-Y-Mwstwr Golf Club in Coychurch, Bridgend.

Tacit have confirmed that they will now sponsor annually the Summer Tournament, which for 2007 will be held at the Gower GC, Three Crosses, Swansea.

As soon as all other fixtures have been confirmed the fixture cards (sponsored by Rigby Taylor) will be issued, I predict this will be late January/early February 2007.

Hot of the press is the news that Master Greenkeeper Huw Morgan is to return to his roots and take up his new position of Course Manager of the Ashburnham GC, Burry Port, Llanelli. Huw is a native South Walian and we wish him well and look forward to inviting him onto committee in the not too distant future!

Back from his latest globetrotting experience is the well travelled Dave Gladwin, who along with his long suffering caddie, Vickie, supported the recently held "World Amateur Team Championships" in Cape Town, South Africa. Four rounds played over two courses on consecutive days over the Stellenbosch and Del-Solsa courses the Welsh team consisting of Rhys Davies, Royal Porthcawl; Llewellyn Mathews, Southerndown, and Nigel Edwards, Whitchurch, finished a respectable 4th place. Thanks for the info, Dave, you could end up having a regular column of your own with the amount of travelling that you do!

Norma Stead, wife of our President, Henry, would like to pass on her sincere thanks to all of those who contributed to her fund raising efforts at the recent Autumn Competition at Alice Springs GC, where £3150 was raised - well done lads. Also as a result of the crocodile hunter Steve Irwin, alias David Carvey in full regalia, i.e. leopard skin g-string strutting through the high street of Porthcawl a further £3269 was raised on the day of her recent charity walk. The weather was not too favourable but despite this a large gathering supported her efforts, Well done Norma, keep up the good recovery xx.

On my way to the Regional Seminar in Cannington College, I'm calling in at the Celtic Manor Resort to have a tour of the ongoing works by our good friend, Jim McKenzie. For those of you that don't know, all courses are receiving a total overhaul that will result in three Championship golf courses, The Ryder Cup course, the Montgomery course and the Coldra Woods course. Knowing Jim and the Celtic Manor Resort the way that I do and the fact that they don't do anything by half measures, I can't wait to see what's transpired since my last visit in April. Jim may shoot me for saying this, but Jim will make time for anyone who wishes to see what is going on throughout the complex, he is quite rightly proud of his facility and will find time to show people around and to explain where they are presently and where they wish to end up. Why not give him a ring and arrange a visit, you'll be amazed.

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 Melissa at BIGGA HOUSE on melissa@bigga.co.uk or 01347 833800

SECTION NOTES INFORMATION

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

Word limit for Section notes: 500-600.

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

In the Shed ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

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ANAGRAM

LOONY TRUE WEARINESS

Answer: New Year's Resolution

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



A QUICK NINE HOLES

- Giuseppe Farina
- Alfonso de Portago and Peter Collins
- Annie Lennox
- Apple
- Paul Hewson
- The Faces
- A lively two beat time Russian or Ukranian dance
- Seven
- Rindt, McLaren and Courage