



News from the Chief Executive

In early July the telephone system at BIGGA House will be updated to include an automated answering service together with a host of other features that are now possible, thanks to the wonders of modern science. Love them or hate them such systems have become a part of every day life and for the Association it presents an opportunity to make some substantial savings. Callers will be offered a short menu of options, one of which will be to speak to an operator for help. The financial gain comes as a result of the changes in jobs for Rachael and Brad who were originally employed in reception. Their original posts become redundant and their non-telephone duties will be absorbed elsewhere in the office. Brad has accepted the position of Membership Services Assistant and Rachael will become Sami's assistant in the Education Department, both of these are replacement jobs and not new ones.

There seems to be a great deal of interest, debate and speculation regarding BIGGA's talks with the IOG. I can only repeat my earlier comments, stressing that it is not a 'done deal' and that any firm proposals will have to be approved by the members of both organisations. How this will take place, if we get that far, has yet to be determined. One solution, and arguably the fairest, may be by an independently controlled postal ballot. We are a long way off that stage and I cannot help but feel that some of the Chinese whispers are being blown up out of all proportion. If any member wishes more information or clarification on a matter then I suggest that they contact me direct by telephone, letter, email or in person. Please do not expect me to enter into a loaded debate on a public bulletin board somewhere.

I often see it stated that BIGGA is at a crossroads. Quite frankly I do not know a time when it has not been at a crossroads. The journey since it's formation in 1987 has been far from easy however I would like to think that the greenkeeping industry, and those employed in it, has benefited as a result of the Association's activities and will continue to do so.

I finish with two thought provoking extracts:

'Most of us find change uncomfortable, if not traumatic; yet change can be both exhilarating and desirable. Change tests our convictions and calls into question our intentions and aspirations, clearing a path for growth. It always requires that we make choices - to choose between a reactive and anticipatory course, between being good and doing good, and between suffering change and causing change. The resulting decisions shape our life and how we look at it.' Clement Mok, Communication Arts.

'Are you a professional? How you look, talk, write, act and work determines whether you are a professional or an amateur.' I came across this on www.tipsforsuccess.org which is a website worth a visit. If you have five minutes to spare take a look and see if you can relate to any of the other remarks listed there!

John Pemberton



SCOTLAND – CENTRAL

On the education front we hosted two successful seminars last month. Frank Newberry delivered an excellent two-day Course on "Leadership and Management Skills", in his usual entertaining, and inspiring manner. Everyone left with some positive ideas on how to improve their personal effectiveness within their teams, and also how to develop their careers. Kevin Barker, R&A Rules Official, gave a very informative and enjoyable evening presentation, with excellent video examples to demonstrate the importance of course set up by the greenkeepers, and how it influences decisions on the rules of golf. This sparked much debate, which continued into the bar afterwards.

As Chairman of the Central Section I have to say the first golf tournament of 2007 was a great success, having 60 members of the Section playing Panmure Golf Course on a perfect sunny day says it all. On driving up to the course you are presented with a fantastic view of the course and clubhouse. My first impressions then were that we were in for a great day. I was not disappointed!

The hospitality we received from the Golf Club was first class, and many thanks go to Secretary/Manager, Charles Phillip, for taking such good care of us and for presenting the prizes at the end of the day. His warm words of appreciation to the greenkeeping profession were very encouraging. The food and the service from the staff were all first class, and the clubhouse had a fantastic atmosphere. Congratulations to Gary Nicol, the Course Manager, and his staff for presenting a great challenge for us on a fantastic course with some tricky pin positions. It was clear to all why it deserved to be chosen for the upcoming Open Qualifier. Many thanks Gary and best of luck when it comes.

Thanks also go to the BIGGA National Chairman, Billy McMillan, and the Scottish Chairman, Stuart Greenwood, for taking the time to attend our Section outing, and to Billy for his kind words of support at the prize presentation. Having the opportunity to play with them both, and Gary, on the day was very enjoyable. With Gary onside I was looking forward to some local knowledge to help us get round. I think my score tells you how well Gary knows his course. I enjoyed your company and thanks for a great day. Well played all the winners on the day with some really good scores, on such a challenging test of control. To see the winners and scores for the day and photos visit our website (see end of notes).

Billy caddied for Andy Mellon for the last two holes as a reward for finding his passport, which he had dropped on the 4th hole. Unfortunately Andy couldn't play as well as Billy could caddie. Billy's patience with Andy's wayward game was admirable. Last I heard Andy was rethinking his gorse/broom planting policy at Elmwood, and asking his team to hand in any lost balls they find.

Note to Billy: You don't need a passport to get into Scotland, (Not yet anyway), but rest assured you will always be very welcome anytime.

The Patrons play a big part in supporting us locally, and I assure you that your commitment to the Section is very much appreciated and commented on among the members. A huge thank you to all our members who made it on the day. It's you who make this Section the success it is, and it was great to see so many new faces along with

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the old ones. I'll let you decide which you think you are. The Section is growing all the time and more events will be organised to suit the needs of the members.

Last, but not least, I'd like to thank the rest of the committee. I know they don't do it for the thanks; they do it because they enjoy being part of BIGGA, and the benefits of associating with their fellow greenkeepers. That's what it's all about after all.

Oh I have to tell you that, if any member is going to mainland Europe this year, contact Paul at Downfield he has some Euros that he has been trying to get rid of. I think he forgot he was dealing with a Fifer when he tried to slip a 5 Euro note into the raffle instead of a £5. Paul, you need a long spoon to sup with a Fifer.

I'm looking forward to the Scottish Tournament which is being played over the border on the superb links course at Goswick on June 21. Hope as many of you as possible can make it. I look forward to the same support this autumn when we make the trip to The Dukes - another fantastic venue.

Any news, queries or info contact us and we'll pass it on.
www.biggacentralsection.org.uk 01334 658914

*Chairman: Derek Scott
Secretary: Andy Mellon*



SCOTLAND – EAST

As I write this report in early June, the dry weather of April and early May has given way to the more typical Scottish climate at this time of year - sunshine and showers!

I commence this month's news with an update on Graeme Wood who, as most of you know, is in the Stroke Recovery Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Edinburgh. I have been advised by Stuart Greenwood that Graeme is making slow but steady progress and is starting to put back on some of the weight he lost - initially, aided by some chocolate bars brought in by the aforementioned Mr Greenwood!

I have a few dates for your diaries which have been passed on to me by your Secretary, Stevie Dixon. The Willie Woods Tournament will be held this year at the spectacular moorland setting of West Linton GC on August 23. The Autumn Outing will be held at Ratho Park this year on September 18, which will give everybody an opportunity to see the environmental improvement works carried out by Tom Murray and his team. I have been assured that entry forms for both events will be winging their way to you shortly.

This year's annual Dinner Dance will once again be held at the Kilspindie House Hotel in Aberlady on Saturday, December 8. To reserve accommodation and book your tickets, please contact Stevie Dixon in the first instance on: 0131 443 0235.

On the educational front, the committee have asked me to advise you that

they are looking to run CPD Courses (Continuous Personal Development) at Oatridge College on Management topics. These are credited units which would count towards gaining a Level 4 Certificate. The courses are due to start on September 7, 2007. For further information and/or, to book your place, please contact Stevie Dixon or any committee member as soon as possible. NB - A minimum number of 10 are required to make these courses possible.

On a sad note, I have to advise you that George Thompson's father passed away at the end of May, he was 95. Like his son today, John Robert Thompson, to give him his full title, was a dedicated greenkeeper working as Head Man at Goswick from 1948 until his retirement in 1977. On his retirement he passed the reins over to his son who remains there to this day. Our deepest sympathies are extended to George and his family at this time.

On Sunday, May 6, close friends and BIGGA Members, Andy Forrest and Chris Yeaman, took part in the BUPA 10km Great Run in Edinburgh to raise money for the Chris Yeaman Jnr Charity Day which is held annually at West Linton GC. They were joined on the day by Andy's wife, Kirsty, and the trio completed the run in a commendable time of 1hr 8min.

Not to be outdone, yours truly took part in the MacMillan Corbett Challenge on Saturday, May 26 with Roz and a group of friends. (A Corbett is a peak more than 2000' above sea level but less than 3000'.) We started the walk at Grey Mare's Tail car park with our destination being the White Comb which is high above Loch Skene in Dumfries and Galloway. In all, we raised over £1000 for MacMillan Cancer Research.

Finally, I am sure John Philp and his team will have Carnoustie in excellent condition for the Open Championship this July.

Mike Dooner



SCOTLAND – NORTH

I am a bit late with this piece of information but Colin Russell, who was Head Greenkeeper at Turriff GC, left in June 2006 to go to Muckhart GC, near Gleneagles. Jim Smart, who was Deputy at the time, was given the job on a temporary basis until September 1, 2006 when he became Head Greenkeeper. He has done some sterling work since then on the golf course, which has been noticed by the members and they appreciate his hard work and application to the job overall. Good luck with your new position Jim and sorry for the delay in letting people know.

The Spring Outing took place at Oldmeldrum GC on May 17. Most importantly well done to Robert O Donnell and his staff for the excellent condition of the golf course on the day. It's never easy when a bunch of greenkeepers turn up for the day, but you had nothing to worry about Robert the course was great.

The one noticeable issue from the outing was the lack of numbers that came along. More than half the field was made up of committee or trade members, which is very disappointing for the host club and also the committee. We recently discussed at a meeting the lack of numbers and are concerned that the drop in interest in the golf outings is now

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critical. If the numbers continue to drop as they are then the golf outings may stop because we are starting to run them at a loss because of the low numbers attending. As usual it is the same faces each year that turn up for the outings regardless of where they are held. We have over 250 members in the Section but only 38 turned up at Oldmeldrum. It is a shame because they missed a good day out and some healthy banter with those who did turn up. We know as a committee that it is not easy to get away sometimes for these outings so we are considering having the Spring Outing earlier next year, in Mid April, to see if that will increase the numbers. Have all you non-attendees over the last few years lost interest in the Section or is it just too much hassle to try and get away? Let's hope the golf outings don't suffer, as they are an enjoyable day out and a chance to catch up with old friends. Results from spring outing: 200 Club: £30 - Steven Mitchell, £30 - Cecil George, £30 - Stevie Mackintosh and £100 winner - Ian Buchan. Longest Drives- Class 3 - Hugh Mclatchie Class 2 - Stewart Brown, Class 1 - Bob Hardie. Nearest the Pin- Mike Keay. Sweep Winners - 1.David Duggan, 2.Jim McCormack, 3.Euan Rankin, 4.Craig Mackay. Guest Winner - Peter Boyd. Trade Winner - Raymond Warrender. Alpha Plus Committee Winner- Steve Sullivan. Veterans Trophy- 1.Brian Hunter, 2.Donald Patience. Apprentice Trophy- Euan Rankin 98-27=71 nett.

1.3 David Duggan 91-22=69; 2.3 Euan Rankin 98-27=71; 3.3 Brian Hunter 98-21=77. 1.2 Billy Craig 83-10=73; 2.2 Kevin Fowler 81-7=74;

2.3 Stewart Brown 84-10=74. 1.1 Jim McCormack 74-5=69; 1.2 Steve Sullivan 78-6=72; 1.3 Bob Hardie 81-6=75.

Scratch Prize 1. Kevin Thompson 74, 2. Craig Mackay 78.

The Open is at Carnoustie again this year and I'm sure John Philp and his staff will have the course set up to test the best. I walked part of the course in late May and it was in great shape. Give them a good test John as always and hopefully we will have another exciting finish again and a Scottish winner.

The Scottish Stroke play Championship was played at Royal Dornoch in early June. The winner Kevin McAlpine had some very good scores with a notable 64 in the 3rd round. The weather on the Sunday was hellish with heavy rain all day but the course sucked it up like an old pro, which is testament to the condition of the golf course. Well done to Eoin and his team in preparing the course to its usual high standards.

Not much else from me this month. Can't wait for the football season to get going again so we can add too the haul from last year. Mind you I hope the boys in blue get their act together and give us some decent competition.

This month we welcome to new members: Mr Kyle Cruickshank, Assistant Greenkeeper at Inchmarlo GC and Mr Trevor Cameron Greenkeeper at Muir of Ord GC.

Robert Patterson



CLEVELAND

Firstly I would like to report on the Spring Tournament, held at Houghton-le-Spring GC on Wednesday, April 18. Congratulations to Head Greenkeeper, Richie Hood and his staff for the excellent condition of the course. Many thanks to the catering staff for the top quality food and the hospitality too! The results were as follows: Category 1, 0 – 9 handicap; 1.Daniel Simpson (Bishop Auckland GC); 2.Phil Hargrave (Crook GC); 3.Chris Spence (Crook GC). Category 2, 10 – 18 handicap: 1.Barry Walker (City of Newcastle GC); 2.Robert Hancock (Dinsdale Spa GC); 3.Alan Reed (Saltburn GC). Category 3, 19 – 28 handicap: 1 Dave Jobey (Consett GC); 2.Ian Dunnabie (Dinsdale Spa GC); 3.Ian Pemberton (Cleveland GC). The winner of the trade prize was Alastair Whitby of Lloyds Ltd. What a bandit! Longest Drive was won by Daniel Simpson and Phil Hargrave was 'Nearest the Pin'. Dave Bell of City of Newcastle won the 'Booby Prize' Aptly this was a Putting Practice Game – I told him that 'Black and White g*s*s' never hit the target.

On behalf of the Section I would like to sincerely thank Jamie Applegarth of Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day. It was nice to see Tony Bell, Head Groundsman at Middlesbrough Football Club attending as a guest of Jamie. Congratulations to Tony as he finished third in the Premier League for pitch quality – well done AB! The following companies also provided prizes on the day – Aitkens, Alpha Amenity, Lloyds Ltd., Northern Lubricants, Tacit and Turfcare Specialists.





There has been some movement on the jobs front recently. Glen Baxter has left South Shields GC to take up a position as an area manager for Rigby Taylor. We all wish him well in his new venture. Phil Hargrave moves from Crook to 'Shields' to take on the Head Greenkeepers job. Good luck Phil! Alan Miller, formerly of Chester-le-Street GC, has been 'made up' to Head Greenkeeper at Crook. All the best All!

Initially we have had plenty of interest in our night at Sedgfield Races for the Ladies Meeting. However, yet again, when it came down to the nitty-gritty there was only two greenkeepers and their wives paid up and attended. Barry and Allie Walker plus Phil and Suzanne Hargrave had a great night, especially as Baz was well up on the night after backing the big priced winner of the first race – git. Money goes to money as the old saying goes. Yours truly didn't have one turn in the winners queue at the bookies – now there's a surprise!

Finally well done to the Boro for finishing 'Top Dogs' and the Mackems for gaining promotion to the 'Big League'. Big Sam has certainly got his work cut out but if his first two signings are anything to go by then the Mags may well be looking at a challenging season.

Any news to Terry "El Prez" Charlton on: 07831 214879



SHEFFIELD

Firstly I would like to apologise for the lack of news in the last few months but there really hasn't been any to my knowledge!

On May 14 we held our Spring Tournament, at Rotherham GC, who I would like to once again thank for their continued support of our Section and for giving us courtesy of their course again! It is very much appreciated.

Thanks also goes to Dave Chappell and his staff for the excellent condition of Rotherham after all the rain we had over the previous weekend - Well done Dave!

Our main sponsor of the tournament was Pro-Turf. We would like to thank Graham Fish once again for his continued support of our Section, it is really appreciated. Graham and Pro-Turf provided an excellent prize table with prizes for all the greenkeepers who played, once again it shows it is worth coming to join us on our golf days. Thanks also to all the other trade members who provided prizes for the raffle.

After all the golf had been played, Mike Stubby, Captain of Rotherham, presented the prizes: the winner was a very well known face to him - Dave Chappell, well played Dave!

1.D Chappell, 38pts; 2.D Womack, 37pts; 3.A Unwin, 35pts bb9; 4.S Redman, 35pts; 5.G Briton, 34pts and the trade prize winner was Mike Brear 34pts.

Finally, just a few small things, could all trophy winners please try and keep our trophies in good clean order as in the past we have had a few returned in not such good condition!

If anyone changes address could you please inform us so that we can forward golf entry forms etc to your correct address, in future there will be no telephone entries accepted under any circumstances and no late entries accepted at all. We have a deadline for a reason and we give everyone enough time to get their entries in with ease!

Hopefully we should have some information about the Wembley trip in next month's magazine. As usual any news please feel free to contact me on: 07793111845 or: jv.lax@tesco.net

John Lax



EAST MIDLAND

I start this report with the results from the Spring Tournament that took place at Horsley Lodge GC on Thursday, May 24. Handicap Section 0-14: 1.C.Brown 37 pts (qualifies for National Championship); 2. J.Beardsley 35pts; 3. N.Miller 33pts; 4. P.Gotheridge 32pts.

Handicap Section 15-28: 1. M. Billings, 30pts (qualifies for National Championship); 2. G. Robson 30pts; 3. T. Bloodworth 28pts; 4. A.De. Wet 27pts. Reps' prize: K. Kinzer 33pts. Nearest the Pin was won by C.Brown (Greenkeeper), G.Thurman (Rep). The Longest Drive was won by N.Miller (Greenkeeper), K.Haslam (Rep).

Thanks for the day go to Russell Allen and his staff for preparing the course in excellent condition and to David Smith of Mansfield Sand for sponsoring the event.

The Summer Tournament takes place at Chevin GC on Wednesday, July 18 and if you have not received your entry form please contact me on: 07745227224.

Dan Rodgers



MIDLAND

Well isn't it a kick in the stones when you have bust a gut to prepare your course, and then it tips it down on the day. Such happened at our spring event at Ludlow GC, however, despite such the course was in excellent condition and stood-up well to the inclement weather. Congratulations to Chris Roberts and his fine team for a lovely track. The combination between Race Course and Golf Course is somewhat unusual, yet works. But the 'sport of kings' was over shadowed by the 'gods of Graminae' presentation. The results of the day were: 1.D. Fellows; 2.S. Scott; 3.M. Walker; 4.R. Beacham; 5.A. Jones; 6.R. Thomas; 7.L. Swann. The main table sponsor was our old friend J. Mullings/Vitax. Trade winner: P. McCrainor. Our thanks to R. Page & K. Pugh/Turners for sustenance around the course. Our thanks to Ludlow GC. and Mr J. Smallman for their/his hospitality.

Still on golf matches, we also were invited for the 56th year to play

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the Annual President's Match at Handsworth GC. My partner and I played well in our match, however we were thrashed. They were giving us shots and with a combined age of 150yrs, against our 70yrs, it just shows how versatile our sport is. Our thanks to Handsworth GC and to the President Mr Degge. The match was won by Handsworth 6:5-5:5. Well played gentlemen.

It is my unfortunate duty to report that Mr Matthew Folka, from Hawkstone GC, has sadly passed away. From the whole of the Section our condolences to his family and friends at this most difficult time.

With great pleasure I would like to welcome two new members to the Section: James Hampson and Gary Wood. Talking about new members, congratulations to Dave Gibbons on the arrival of his first son, Callum (Dove) David. It makes ones eyes water, 10lb 1/2oz, he'll need some feeding. I'm sure Cheryl is more than up to the job. A personal note now, Steve ex Hobson's, I've lost your contact number and recent happenings. Please give me a call mate.

What's this I see, Mike Whitehouse driving a fancy Merc? Must be why he's joined Whitemoss. Good luck in your new position mate.

Now come on Gashey, how can you get away with putting raking bunkers at the U.S. Open before taking your wife out on her birthday? Enjoy yourself mate; she will make you pay 10 fold chap.

Just time to thank our machinery friends at Burrows for their kind sponsorship of this month's calendar. Don't forget to consider them for your machinery requirements. Our thanks to them for their continued support. Also don't forget to get your entries in for our autumn event at Walsall GC on 12/9/07. Samba Barry?

Sean McDade



EAST OF ENGLAND

Firstly I will explain the fixture card scenario. We haven't got one, we were promised one, we thought we had one, we nearly got one, suffice to say the age old lesson was once again learned, speak to the organ grinder not the monkey. You should have all the dates by now but if anybody is not sure of any give me a call.

Now onto important matters. The second golf day was held at Rutland County. It was a good turnout considering the short week and the weather. Our thanks go to Chris and Rutland for allowing us the day. The results were as follows: 1.C Wilkinson; 2.S Bossett; 3.B Robinson; Trade Prize - D Smith; Nearest the Pin - D Smith; Longest Drive - R Welford.

A big thank you to Dave Smith and Mansfield Sands for sponsoring the day, although as you can see from the results he took a couple of prizes back home with him. Don't worry Dave – they will keep for the Christmas raffle. I was fortunate enough (I think that's the right phrase) to play with Dave, an experience I will never forget. I would also like to mention our other playing partner who, despite numerous distractions, finished runner up. A tremendous effort considering the circumstances Simon.

A little bird tells me that Mrs Howkins is expecting a new arrival later in the year. Congratulations Les I know you had at least a small part in the proceedings. Well done and good luck to you all.

Finally I am astounded. I never would have thought that we would have such a legend in our midst! Personally I don't know how he does it – working on a golf course, playing golf and being a global rock star! Step forward Russ Moody or should I say Axel Rose. Yes, your eyes don't deceive you, Russ Moody, that gentle giant is a colossus of the rock world. Anybody looking for a band or even just an autograph can contact Russ at Lincoln Golf Club or give me a call (for a small bung I'll be agent). Good luck to you mate.

Allan Walker 07974816927



BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

Greenkeepers in the UK and, I am sure, across the world are looking at the evidence of climate change and dare I say it, global warming? Or, is it just a load of hot air and the sun is simply getting a bit hotter? It's a hard job predicting rainfall when our own top weathermen can still get it wrong. So, what's the future for 2007 likely to be? In April we had some crazy weather patterns - one minute we are in short sleeves and t-shirts, the next a frost to dampen our hopes with a woolly jumper - and as I sit here writing this, the heavens have opened again with much needed rain for all of us after a very dry and windy spell. Let's hope the summer of 2007 is not too vicious. However, I think tough times are ahead and a certainty when it comes to the weather. Anyway, will July be a hot one or possibly a real record breaker? We will wait and see.

The BB&O National Qualifier Tournament was set in a picturesque valley with unrivalled views high up across stunning scenery and countryside just outside the town of Loudwater - this was Wycombe Heights GC which provided the perfect challenge and venue for our first event in 2007. A good turnout on a spectacular spring day enjoyed a fabulous golf course presented in first class condition to find the winners who will make the long trip to the Leven links championship course near St Andrews.

Local knowledge proved the key to winning as our host Rob Surgey managed the best gross score of the day with 75. Net results were as follows: 1.1. Hardaker, Wycombe Heights; 1.2 D. Marshall, Lambourne; 1.3 A. Higgs, Blue Mountain; 1.4 S. Gardener, Flackwell Heath; 1.5 C. Small, Ellesborough, and the longest walk after a gruelling 100 shots plus went to Dale Hand, Aylesbury. Longest drive went to R. Davis, Berkshire. Nearest the Pin to Calum Taylor, Blue Mountain, and Jack Robinson, Chairman of Wycombe Heights, winning the trade and guest prize.

The two making the journey to Scotland for the qualifier this year are Steve Gardener gross 76, Flackwell Heath, and Alistair Higgs net 71, Blue Mountain. A big thanks to The Burhill Group for allowing us the courtesy of the course and to Rob Surgey and Colin Wilson and his team for the conditions they presented for us and also to the superb catering and bar staff who ensured we all had a great day out.

Thanks to Tacit, who were the main sponsors of the day, and all the



other trade who supported us on the day and in the raffle.

The second event this year is The Summer Tournament, sponsored by Gem Professional, at Sonning GC, in Berkshire, on July 4. Results will be in next month's magazine.

Information on Section events can be gleaned from the new www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk website where you will be able to download your entry form and tee times when they are published. With all this in mind our Section Secretary, Dean Jones, looks forward to your entries which, if on time, makes for a more organised and enjoyable day. So please try and get your entry forms in by the closing date.

On the education front, Alec MacIndoe (recently converted back to Rangers) is well underway in planning a seminar for us all, sometime in late autumn, date to be confirmed, but as soon as more information becomes available this will be on the website.

If there is any news or views you would like to share with the Section please get in touch. Wishing you all the very best in our new Spanish climate.

Mark Day: mark.day@tacticgolf.com



SOUTH EAST – SURREY

Tuesday, June 6. Hello readers and welcome once again to my monthly jottings on the comings and goings in Surrey. The big splash news follows later. More importantly congratulations to Milly Grace Gill who entered our world weighing 8lbs 7ozs on May 28. To Milly's mum, Lisa, her three brothers and dad Jason, Hampton Court Palace GC, we send our best wishes for a very happy future.

I was returning home from deepest Kent last week and driving along an unusually quiet M20 in my normal highly attentive state when directly in front of me, waddling across the inside lane, was Mrs Duck being followed by her eight ducklings, completely unaware of the danger. I used the hard shoulder to avoid mass murder and another driver did the same in the outer lane. I hope they made it to safety but it just goes to show that any animal outside its normal habitat can make some serious errors of judgement.

I now know that even humans can make errors when confronted by an unusual situation and are also capable of ending up in a habitat similar to that preferred by Mrs Duck and her brood but more of that later.

Golf at Gatton Manor GC on Thursday, May 17 was excellent. Paul Hobden and his team had produced a course that was a delight to play and the caterers a meal that was a delight to eat. Thank you to Gatton Manor for the warm welcome and courtesy of the course. The weather was very kind with sunny spells and no rain although one of our golfers did not need the rain to cool his brow. The format was a full handicap stable ford competition sponsored by Avoncrop and represented by Gary Olgivie. It was unfortunate that not all golfers were informed of the two extra novelty prizes on offer or the competition for them may

have been more keen.

The winners were: Ashley Allpress 39pts; Tony Bremer 38 pts; Barry Cannon 36pts; Barry West 34pts. Tony Bremer was Longest/Straightest drive and Ashley Allpress, Nearest the pin.

A football match is being arranged between Surrey and Essex Sections for later in the year so please all you energetic chaps with magic left and right feet contact Mr John Ross for details: 0798584304.

I have had a complaint from Mr Ron Christie that I did not mention last month that he won the Ray Day Memorial Trophy at Walton Heath in March. As this was not a Surrey Section event and I that I new his face was to be splashed all over page 4, I thought it better not to pamper his ego by putting him in Surrey Section as well. I now realise that I was wrong and I personally congratulate him on a fine photograph and only if you look carefully can you see the join.

I almost forgot about Gary Olgivie at Gatton Manor and I know that he would never forgive me if I left out the details of his little adventure and successes out of this month's edition. Remember those two extra novelty prizes, well who do you think won them? That's right it was Gary. The Longest Dive and Nearest the Fin were won in fine style according to his playing partners. Gareth Roberts said although his entry into the pond on the 6th hole had rather too much splash he still marked him 7.5 and had Gary found his ball it would have been higher. Tony Bremer missed seeing the entry but did applaud with much enthusiasm Gary's gallant attempt at gaining dry land using only his sand wedge. George Barr who also witnessed the whole entry was lucky to avoid serious injury when rushing to congratulate Gary he collapsed into a heap and was so convulsed by happiness at Gary's achievement he was unable to move for many minutes. George later said that it was the best forward dive, with pike, or should that read, with sand wedge, that he had seen this side of the Olympics and as he eat his meal he could not hide the odd smile of pleasure. For Gary, he is now assured, due to any run off of chemicals from greens and fairways into the ditches that fill the pond he will never again have to visit his doctor for treatment against fusarium, leather jackets or worms.

I do need news to splash across our Around the Green Spot every month so please like Ronnie let me know on: 07879474038.

Brian Willmott



KENT

Hi sports fans, By the time you read this report our summer golf event at Westgate and Birchington would have been and gone and I hope all of you who attended had a great time. Results and report will follow next month. Our next event is to be held at The Wildernesse Club on September 27. This event will be played in a three ball format with team and individual prizes on offer. Entry forms and more details will appear on our website soon along with all other up-to-date info and goings on in our Section.

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The next big event after that will be the south east Regional Seminar which Kent are hosting this year. This will be held at the excellent facilities at Hadlow College in Tonbridge on October 30. We have some great speakers lined up for the day. Again, see the website for more details.

Your committee have been very busy of late organising the seminar, our usual industry days and a full golf events calendar for 2008! All members will receive a fixture list hopefully by Christmas (sorry to mention the 'C' word!). If anybody wishes their course to be considered for hosting a 2009 event please let us know as soon as possible please.

If you haven't visited our website yet please do so and if you have any funny pictures you don't mind sharing with us then please download them on our gallery!

Rob Holland

kentgreenkeepers.co.uk



SUSSEX

Hello again, can you believe we are half way through the year already - time flies when your having fun!

We had a good turn out at our Spring Golf Day at Ham Manor with over 35 players attending. This was our qualifier for the National Tournament which will be held in Scotland at Barrassie and Dundonald golf club's. A big thank you must go to everyone at Ham Manor for the warm welcome and for giving us such a great day. A big thank you to budd the chudd, and good luck for his move to Effingham GC. Also, a big thank you to our sponsors of the day, John Shaw's - These events do not happen without your support.

The results of the day are as follows: Nearest the Pin - Richard may, sponsored by Tower Chemicals; Trade Prize - Gary (the man from Atlantis Ogilvy); Best Nett - 1.Chris Ahier 75; 2.Merrick Treveski 76; 3.Eric Green 76; Best Gross - 1.George Barr 76; 2.David Hinks 86; 3 John Hills 87. Best Nett and Gross go through to the finals in Scotland, so congratulations to George and Chris. If these players cannot make it they must let me know and the next in line will be entitled to go.

Moving on to the football, there is a possibility that we have got a sponsor for the kit but there are a few things to sort out before we can make it official. Also, we do have a home ground which is three bridges football club. This is sponsored by John Wart from Albourne Irrigation - So a big thank you to him.

You didn't think you were going to get a way with it did you Gary? Just in case you hadn't heard, Gary attended a Surrey Golf Day, he was trying to retrieve his golf ball from a lake and slipped and ended up falling in. Now I can hear a lot of cheering from here. No, to be honest it couldn't have happened to a nicer bloke!

If there is any news you want me to include in ATG please contact me on: 07776223234 or email me: robert.hudson77@btinternet.com

Cheers for now

Rob Hudson



ESSEX

Well the weather changed with a vengeance from temperatures out of the norm for the time of year, to rain more reminiscent to March and April. Still we needed it and now we have grass to cut.

Once again members from our Section have helped out on the greenkeeping support squad at the PGA Championship, Wentworth. The following members from our Section were on the team: Andy Cracknell, Robert Bramwell, Nick Gates, Mark Gemmill and Nick Swanson - well done guys.

The pairs competition is off and running and a reminder to everyone involved, to make sure that they have played there games within the time frame stipulated.

Paul O'Kane has reported that he has been overwhelmed with interest in the chainsaw courses he is running, and has now filled places up until October. Those interested in this course or any other courses, please contact Paul on: 07921292057. His email details are on the website. The date for the Autumn Stableford tournament at Colchester GC is August 15 - So be sure to make a note and get your entries in sooner rather than later.

Entry forms can be downloaded from our website, www.essexbigga.co.uk (if you don't get one through the post) and starting times will be posted on the web, two or three days prior to the event.

Sorry this month's news is a bit light on the ground, anyone who has any news for inclusion in the "Around the Green" section can email me at: highwoods.photographic@virgin.net or call me on: 01206852353.

Arnold Phipps-Jones



SOUTH WEST AND WALES

I'll start this month with a groveling apology - the match against the Secretaries at Henbury had to be changed due to a clash of dates, and the new date came "as a little bit of a surprise" to Wayne Vincent, Team Captain. In the event, thanks to some superb crisis management Wayne managed to come up with a finely-honed team at very short notice, but unfortunately it was a team capable of losing by almost the heaviest possible margin. Not quite the result that Wayne was looking for in his opening game, with only Richard Louisson and Alan Quartermain salvaging a half point. Henbury was presented in immaculate condition so we couldn't use that excuse. The weather was either bright sunshine, or torrential storms, which should've favoured the greenkeepers, but no, it was a good old-fashioned thrashing. Thanks very much to Henbury, and particularly Gary Hauley and the greenkeeping team for the wonderful



SOUTH COAST

Hello everyone, and welcome to the latest news from the South Coast Section. I'm sure you will all agree the year is flying by and before we know it we'll be signing up for the Turkey Trot at Barton-on-Sea! But before that, if you receive this issue in time, we have the Summer Tournament at Andover GC to look forward to on Tuesday, July 3. Chris Sturgess and his Assistant, Dave, will be working very hard to present their golf course in what is the golf club's centenary year. If you want to attend this or any of our Golf Days please contact Chris Sturgess on: 0777 313 8409 or send a cheque to Chris direct at his home address: 31 Bay Rd, Sholing, Southampton SO19 8EZ.

A fantastic day was had by all who attended the Scotts/BIGGA Golf Management Trophy, which was held at Stoneham GC on May 31. For those Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers who have not attended this annual event previously, I thoroughly recommend you raise a team for next year! The teams consist of four players, with one Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper and the remaining three representing the other management roles within the Golf Club e.g. Secretary, Chairman, President etc. The result is tremendous networking across the industry, which of course is very beneficial for the Greenkeepers. Stoneham was no exception with 21 teams competing on what was meant to be a thundery, horrible, wet day but in the end with one 3 minute cloud burst turned out to be ideal playing conditions.

The winning team, with 89 points, was from Southwood GC led by Head Greenkeeper John Mathis with Ian Attoe, Ashley Sharpe and Stirling Robertson – congratulations. Scraping into second place on count back with 81 points was Petersfield GC led by Brian Gillespie, with Peter Badger, Dave Arnold and Alan Cornick. Third were Basingstoke GC led by Head Greenkeeper Colin Hutt, with Simon Lawrence, Brian Knight and Paul Knight. Nearest The Pin – Ali Briggs from Test Valley GC. Longest Drive – Simon Lawrence.

Vince Ley and his team did a tremendous job in the preparation and the presentation of this beautiful golf course. Many compliments were paid to Vince in the Clubhouse. Very well done Vince and the team. The food was superb. Much gratitude to Duncan and his catering staff and to all the team and members at Stoneham GC for making us welcome. In particular to Alan Douglas, Stoneham's Captain, who made a very good speech welcoming us to the Club, their Chairman Clive Cole, and much appreciation goes to Richard Penley-Martin, their Secretary.

Thank you to John Noyce, from Scotts, and their sponsorship for the day. John also made an excellent starter on the first tee (the other starter on the 10th tee was a little bit ropey, but thanks to him anyway!) Finally, well done Jane Jones, our Regional Administrator from BIGGA, who did a fabulous job with the organisation and running of the day.

Joe Crawley - 07721 389200

conditions, and back to the drawing board for "McClaren" Vincent. In fairness of course Steve doesn't have to pick his team at only a couple of days notice, although after some of the recent England results - maybe he does! (Although I wasn't a particular member of the Bring Back Becks campaign, even Crouchy must have wondered where all the half-decent crosses in the Estonia game were coming from all of a sudden.)

Enmore Park was in similarly good order for the Greenkeeper\Amateur in mid May, despite not having the best of Spring growth – again! Gary Cook presented the course in beautiful condition, and this very popular event was thoroughly enjoyed by all the competitors. Thanks very much to all at Enmore for the day and congratulations to the winners. 1. J Bachelor and M Chapman, 45 pts; 2. G Cook and M Bovingdon, 43 pts; 3. C Shutt and P McGreevey, 42 pts.

Thanks also to Steve Hazell for attending to fly the flag for Cannington College. Steve asked me to mention that the new Level 3 distance learning course is filling up fast, so to book your place do get in touch with Steve, or Jonathan McDonald, at Cannington as soon as possible.

I was very pleased to hear from Mark Ford of Kingsdown who is well on the way to recovery following his recent heart scare. He particularly asked me to pass on his thanks to all those who sent their best wishes, and also thanked the committee for their card. Mark mentioned that he had been at Kingsdown for 30 years this year and the conversation rapidly turned into a couple of old f*rts reminiscing about over-long careers. Marks first task when he returns to work this month is to appoint an extra member of staff to carry out his physical work while he continues to recover. Is that a twinge I feel all of a sudden?

Looking forward to Cumberwell Park on July 25 followed by the Marc Haring Quiz Night – which is not to be missed. Marc tells me there's a fighting chance of us being let loose on the new nine which should be very worthwhile.

If I could just return to the fixture list for a moment – there are two further corrections to be made. The AGM is at Minchinhampton on Thursday, October 11, and the National Tournament is NOT at Ogbourne St George. All other dates and venues are correct. My apologies again for the printing errors, and any inconvenience caused.

Finally back at Minch we're just stepping up to our final Open Championship Regional Qualifying round, before the tournament moves to Ferndown for the next six years. I'll be quite sorry to see it go as it really gives a focus to the whole season, but with the English Mid-Amateur Championship to look forward to in August (there goes my bank-holiday!) maybe we've got enough focus. Watering is now in full swing with an awful lot to learn about computers, waterbudgets, ET values, pump control software, and system programming. We've just had a text alert system fitted to the pump station, which seemed like a good idea at the time. Any time there's a power failure, or low pressure situation, it sends a text alert to my mobile, and to our Will Harris, our Machinery Managers, mobile. This only ever seems to happen in the middle of the night and it's like having another alarm clock in the room. So the next time you see me, it'll be with red-rimmed eyes, and carrying two bunches of divorce papers from our long-suffering wives.

Paul Worster. paulw@mgcnew.co.uk

Around the Green

DEVON AND CORNWALL



I start my column this month with some desperately sad news. Our great friend and colleague Don Hunt passed away suddenly on Monday, May 14. Don supported greenkeepers up and down the country all his working life and he was also the events organiser for the Devon and Cornwall Section of BIGGA. Don will leave a massive void in the world of greenkeeping and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

During a recent committee meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Section, Abi Crosswood, of Newquay GC, was appointed Secretary of the Section. Abi will be supported by all the "old boys" and Billy Mitchell was given the honour of becoming Abi's Assistant. Graham Gallimore, the Head Greenkeeper at Launceston GC, is the Education Chairman and John Palfrey is the new Fixtures Secretary with Tim Wakeham taking on the role of Treasurer.

Ashbury Golf Club in Okehampton have won The Large Employer of the Year Award at the South West Skills Awards. The Course Manager, Steve Harris, along with his Deputy, Pete Gross, have carried out all training "in-house" and with the help of Bill Pyle and Ron Skinner from the Duchy College, no fewer than 12 greenkeepers from Ashbury achieved their NVQ Level 2. More training is planned for this year for Level 2/3 NVQs and A1 Assessor awards. The partnership between the college and the workplace has been expertly managed and congratulations go to everyone involved.

The Section, along with the Duchy College, sponsored four students to attend the BTME show in January. One of the students sponsored, Mike Wannell, Assistant Greenkeeper at Bovey Castle GC, went on to win The Institute of Groundsmanship Student of the Year Award. This is a fantastic achievement for Mike, Bovey Castle and Duchy College Well Done All!

Any information for this column? Please contact me at stevnevans184@btinternet.com or: 01822 617671.

Steve Evans

SOUTH WALES



The Tower Sport Europe Spring Shield was recently played for at the Coed-y-Mwstwr GC near Bridgend.

The weather was glorious, hot, no wind - ideal for golf and low scoring. The course was a picture, presented superbly by Head Greenkeeper Andrew Hatcher and his team. The greens were true, slick and firm and it was evident to all that participated that a lot of work and effort had been put in (and not only for our benefit) for our tournament, the first of the year.

The hospitality afforded us by all at the golf club was excellent, warm and friendly, they went out of their way to make us feel welcome and

it was appreciated by all.

Tower Sports took on the sponsorship of this event and it was their inaugural competition. Managing Director, David Goldstone got us off to a flying start and then proceeded to take care of everyone throughout the entire day. Again the hospitality afforded us by tower, David and our local representative Gareth Knight was superlative. A sincere thank you to them for their support, the excellent prize table, their hospitality and to David for his attendance and kind words in summing up after presenting the prizes.

Following the golf we were treated to an excellent three course dinner in the marquee, prior to the football (which we won't mention again) the fine food was plentiful (even for Emyr) and great value, a sincere thanks to the catering staff for looking after us so well! The winner of the "Tower Sports Europe - Spring Shield" was Rhys McDonagh from Llanwern with 38 points, winning the trophy and a colour TV. Second place went to local knowledge, Andrew Hatcher, Head Greenkeeper of Coed-y-Mwstwr with 37 points beating Herbie Probert from Pontardawe into third. The longest drive went to Old new boy, Huw Morgan from the Ashburnham golf club and nearest the pin went to Stuart Jones from Maesteg. Best Trade card went to Peter Holmstrom with a very creditable 35 points.

A great day had by all, made by the good weather, an excellent golf course, great company, super hospitality and fine food, what more could one ask for (perhaps a better back swing for the Secretary). A sincere thanks to the directors of the club for giving us courtesy for our visit and to Gareth Summerton especially for allowing us our visit.

By the time you read this someone will have won the Wales Open at the Celtic Manor Resort, we hope that he's Welsh and that the sun also shines on Jim McKenzie and his staff for the event.

Peter Lacey - Section Secretary

PS: Our best wishes to our normal (if we can call him that) around the green scribe, Henry Stead, whose unfortunate trip has resulted in him breaking a wrist (mind you, it makes a change from a Toro!). No but seriously, Henry we wish you a speedy recovery, you never know long term it may improve your grip and you may finally better a handicap of 24!

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Section Notes -

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