



# News from the Chief Executive

## BIGGA BULLETIN BOARD

There has been much debate of late on the BIGGA Bulletin Board regarding the facility to edit postings, or more correctly the lack of edit facility. I personally am not in favour of giving contributors the chance to go back at a later date and change what they write. This, I hasten to add, is not the reason why this facility is missing. The main reason is unnecessary expense. Unlike some businesses we have to contract out all web programming since we cannot afford the luxury of employing someone with this skill.

Anyway, why would you wish to go back on what you have written? Bad spelling? Poor grammar? Something said in haste and later regretted? A mis-informed statement? The better answer is to be sure of what you write and if you are not sure then don't write it! As regards to grammar and spelling, then the solution is simple. Create your postings in MSWord and then use the grammar and spell check before copying the text and pasting it onto the bulletin board. It is surprising how your spelling will improve over time, some people have a natural ability for words or numbers, others have to work at it. I often find it useful to print out and proof read any lengthy text to make sure that it flows and that everything is kept in context. Using this method also ensures that you do not 'time out' from the website and removes the need for speed when writing. Carefully consider what you are going to write, perhaps make a few notes on paper of things that you wish to include, and above all else do not make 'knee jerk' responses to existing postings. The age old maxim of 'less haste more speed' is always a good one to bear in mind.

Harrogate Week 2007 has been a much better financial success than budgeted for due to a combination of increased revenue and savings on expenditure. The Association's Profit and Loss Account will still return a deficit for the current financial year although this will now not be as bad as anticipated. Next year should see a return to profit, but what of future years? This is one of the major issues facing the Board and one that does not have an easy answer. There was a further meeting with the IOG towards the end of April but there is no doubt that, with or without the IOG, the Association needs to strengthen its membership base and this is something that I intend to address over the coming months. BIGGA will continue to work for the benefit of both its members and the turf management profession, in particular greenkeeping and it will commit all reasonable resources in order to achieve this.

My colleagues and I at HQ are always open to constructive suggestions for improvement.

**John Pemberton**

## Central

Hi all, sorry there wasn't any news in last month's mag, but as you can appreciate getting our courses ready for the start of the season takes up all of our spare time. Welcome to all our new members. An updated list will follow next month.

The Section was well represented at the annual Secretaries' Match held at Glenbervie on April 5. The greenkeepers managed to regain the trophy in a 7-3 victory. Many thanks go to the staff at Glenbervie for having the course looking great, and the clubhouse for a superb meal. Anyone who would like to be considered for the next Secretaries' match next year should get in touch with the committee and will be added to the draw for places.

Congratulations go to Mike Lindsay, from Scoonie, on another addition to his family. A wee boy, Campbell. Well done Mike - the snip awaits!

Congratulations to Euan Grant on his appointment to the new project at Machrihanish. Euan has been an enthusiastic and active supporter of the Section and has helped enormously in developing all the activities we have been arranging for our members. He will continue as Vice Chairman until the AGM, after which he will be sorely missed. Perhaps a Section visit to Machrihanish could be arranged? Congratulations to Gordon Mckie, on his appointment to replace Euan as Head Greenkeeper at the Old Course, and to Davie Wilson on his move to the New Course. Good luck guys.

The Spring Outing at Panmure approaches, with an excellent field entered. It looks like being a great day. A full report will be included next month.

We have been very busy on the educational front, with four separate events.

First up was the Disturbance Theory presentation by Henry Bechelet and Richard Windows, from STRI, held at St Andrews. This was very informative and thought provoking. Next on the agenda was Kevin Cavanaugh, from Floratine, and Kevin Brunton, from Greentech Sportsturf, who discussed the importance of soil analysis for effective turf nutrition management. Adrian Mortram carried out a one day workshop on "Using Water Wisely", and this will definitely be a significant factor in the current climate. Finally, we had an excellent turnout to listen to three esteemed American speakers, who took a pleasant April evening off from their Scottish Golf Tour to provide three excellent presentations which sparked much discussion thereafter. Stanley J. Zontek, Director of USGA Green Section, gave an excellent presentation on the alterations at Oakmont GC to prepare for the US Open, Peter J. Landschoot Ph.D. discussed the advantages/disadvantages of the grass species used in the Northern U.S, and Peter H. Dernoeden Ph.D explained the "yellow" turfgrass diseases common to our climatic conditions, some of which will probably become more frequent as expected climatic changes develop. It was good to see so many new faces. If anyone has any requests for any other training, get in touch and if possible we will arrange it for you.

Please also let us know of any news. For up to the minute updates on Section events, check out the website: [www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk), or call Andrew Mellon, Secretary on: 01334 658914  
Derek Scott

## East

Firstly I must apologise for the omission of our report last month. It was submitted but unfortunately doesn't appear to have arrived! We started on a sad note with the news that our Chairman, Graeme Wood, who was in the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh having suffered a major stroke. He was travelling to Stirling for a BIGGA meeting in the company of Stuart Greenwood when he became unwell. The latest news is that Graeme has been moved from the Western to the Stroke Recovery Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, on Craigleith Road in Edinburgh. Although at present he is only allowed visits

from family and close friends, I am sure everyone will join me in wishing Graeme a speedy recovery.

On Tuesday, March 6, the Scottish Conference was held at Lauder College in Dunfermline. The event was superbly organised by Peter Boyd who had enlisted some excellent speakers for the large turnout of Greenkeepers, who had arrived in Dunfermline from all corners of Scotland and the North East of England. It is often said in life that you save the best for last and true to form Kerran Daly, a former BIGGA Chairman, brought the house down with a witty talk on course presentation, and then finished with a sing song aided by a borrowed guitar.

A gentleman on the move is Jimmy Coombe, Head Greenkeeper at Gifford GC, who is retiring after 15 years loyal service. Originally employed in the building trade, Jimmy worked part time at Gifford, before seeing the light and joining the staff at Muirfield in 1982. He moved to Gifford immediately after the 1992 Open Championship at Muirfield, where he has been employed ever since. I understand Jimmy hopes to play lots of bowls and golf on his retirement. However, I have it on good authority that his wife, Helen, has other ideas and painting and decorating rather than golf could be the order of the day. I am sure all his friends in the trade will join me in wishing Jimmy all the best for the future. His successor at Gifford is Jamie Martin who commenced his career at Gifford and in fact was Jimmy's first YTS Trainee. In 1996 he moved to Royal Musselburgh where he has worked under the expert tutelage of John Reid. I am sure he will prove to be a worthy successor to Jimmy.

On Friday, March 2, Ratho Park held their environmental forum for golf club members and greenkeepers. Despite the weather there was a good turnout from members. However, apart from Tom Murray and his deputy Billy Hudson, only one other greenkeeper (Andy Hastie) put in an appearance. The speakers on the night were very informative and included Richard Windows, of the STRI, who gave a talk on managing clay push up greens.

The saying one man's loss is another's gain, became a reality when Douglas Mackenzie, of Prestonfield, turned down a trip to the American Greenkeepers show in Anaheim, LA due to personal commitments. His replacement, Hamish Brough, had a whale of a time, and would like to thank John Deere dealer, Double AA, for their hospitality. On Wednesday, March 28, a meeting was held at Oatridge College to discuss "Education – the way forward" The meeting was chaired by Steve Miller when a wide range of topics were discussed including Level 4 and HND Courses. One of the key decisions made on the day was the removal of horticulture from all greenkeeping courses. On a negative note only seven greenkeepers attended, which is disappointing for the organisers.

It is now April and most members are reporting a good start to the season, helped a great deal by the very mild winter. The first golf outing of the new season was held at Glenbervie GC on Thursday, April 5, when the greenkeepers, captained by Stuart Greenwood played a team from the Scottish Secretaries' Association. The match ended with a resounding 7-3 win for the greenkeeping team, which included East Section members Kenny Mail, Chris Yeoman, Kevin Hodges and last, but certainly not least, Stuart Greenwood. Joe Wallace and his team presented the course in pristine condition, and the clubhouse staff ensured everyone was well fed and watered.

Mike Dooner

**North**

How's it going folks? Hope the weather is suiting you and there is plenty of growth to keep you busy. The Spring Outing is at Oldmeldrum GC this year, so we're hoping for a good turnout to support Robert O Donnell and his staff on the day. Robert and his able Deputy, Graeme Gordon, have been very busy this past winter upgrading the course. Several new bunkers have been added and more have been rebuilt and modernised. Four new tees have been built, a new pond and several other areas of the course have been re-landscaped to improve the course overall. The additional tees have stretched the course to over 6000yds and increased the SSS from 69 to 70. Graeme Gordon has been promoted to Deputy Head as a reward for several years' service and hard work to the club. Well done lads for all your hard work and we look forward to playing the course in the Spring Outing.

The weather during March and early April has been very dry which will probably help most of the inland courses but it is making the Links courses crusty already and the summer hasn't even started yet. Maybe this is the trend to come with global warming starting to have an effect on the weather.

Ross Macrae has left Newmacher GC to become Head Greenkeeper at Huntly GC. This happened a while ago so my apologies Ross for not mentioning it earlier. Good luck to you at Huntly. Ben Brookes and Euan Rankin have moved to Murcar GC from Newmacher, so good luck guys in your new posts.

Gavin Cameron, who has worked at Royal Aberdeen GC for 12 years, has left to try his luck in the oil business. I have worked with Gavin for over nine years and he proved to be a very competent greenkeeper in all areas of the job. It is a pity that people like him are leaving the profession to do other work, this trend is happening all over the UK now because there are very few opportunities in the Deputy category that guys like Gavin can actually move into. I wish Gavin all the best and thank him for his efforts over the past 12 years at Royal Aberdeen. Another greenkeeper who is moving into the oil business is Chris Murdoch, from Murcar GC. I posted a link on the BIGGA website about this trend of people leaving their jobs, and hoped to get a better response than I did, I think in five to 10 years time there might be a shortage of quality greenkeepers around to become head men. I'm interested in any comments that you have on this topic, email: grassman351@aol.com

I recently attended a demonstration at Newmacher GC, by Kevin Strachan Construction services, that demonstrated his Viper screening machine. This machine can screen any material like rubble, general golf course organic material, into re-useable material for construction projects. I recently had Kevin screen about 500 tonne of organic material we had dumped over the years into very good root zone for tee and bunker work. I would imagine every course has material dumped somewhere that can be re-cycled into a re-useable product for divots or construction work.

Robert N Patterson



**North East**

Not a lot to write again this month. As most of you will probably be aware,

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Greenlay have moved from Choppington, after being based there for 36 years, to new, purpose built premises at Baker Rd, Cramlington. The premises have been designed to include a showroom, offices, stores and workshop. This relocation project is part of Greenlays planned future growth. A new Head Greenkeeper and an Assistant have been appointed at Stocksfield GC - taking over from Roy White and Andrew Morrison. Also to welcome to the Section is Jamie Smith, from Slaley Hall, who is moving to Hexham GC, replacing John Moutrie who is retiring.

I have been asked by Regional Administrator, Peter Larter, to remind you that a golf team event is hopefully being played at Matfen Hall GC sometime this summer (this was played at Teeside GC last year) and will be sponsored by Scotts, we are just waiting for confirmation.

Another suggestion from Peter Larter was if any member needs to use the Legal Helpline with any dispute regarding work, get in touch with him and he will put you in touch with the necessary persons to handle the situation.

As soon as I hear anything about the Scotts competition I will be in touch either by Section news or by phone, in the meantime if anyone is interested in this event get in touch with me and I will forward entries to Peter Larter. Jimmy Richardson

#### North West

We had a great day at Withington GC recently, to raise money for Stuart Bridge. The course and the turnout was fantastic with all the tee times booked, I think many more greenkeepers and trade members would like to have taken part but could not get in. I know a lot of money was raised but unfortunately do not have all the details, needless to say it was a lovely day. Stuart actually turned up on the day which was a great surprise. I would just like to thank everyone who organised the day, you all know who you are. It was very heartwarming to know that people in our business can pull together and help out a fellow greenkeeper in times of need. We have a misprint in our yearly fixture list, the summer tournament at Denton GC will be played on June 28 and not 14 as stated. Sorry about that.

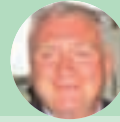
If you wish to play in any of the tournaments please send a cheque for £20 to: Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park GC, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. If you wish to play in any of the team events please contact Bill too. I read something the other week which I think might be of some help to us greenkeepers and it was something like this, you have 10% of the members who like you. You have 10% of the members who hate you. You have to try and please the other 80% because the other 20% won't change their minds. Chris Sheehan

#### Cleveland

Well, April has started fine and dry with many courses completing their winter work on time and without too much mess. Do we get the wetting agents in now in case the dry spell continues? WARNING - their arrival always prompts a prolonged period of rain!

I would like to start by thanking Henry Bechelet of the STRI who presented a very interesting lecture on the 'Disturbance Theory' to our members last month. This was up to Henry's usual high standard and his wit and repartee added to the night. He's not a bad lad for a Saints fan. Thanks to Teesside GC for hosting the event and making us very welcome.

I was speaking to Mark Davison, Head Groundsman at Sedgefield Racecourse recently. They have a six-race 'Ladies Night' meeting on Thursday, May 31. In conjunction with the local greenkeepers sections we are planning a night out and a betting extravaganza. Why not treat the lady in your life to a night out (make sure the wife doesn't find out mind!) Course tickets are available at a very reasonable £6 (gets only basic facilities in the centre of



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**NORTHERN & MIDLAND**  
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the track) and only £11.20 for a Grandstand paddock ticket. However, I am working on getting a 'bit of a deal' so please ring me to book your tickets as soon as possible. I'm afraid it's payment up front folks.

Ian Pemberton has taken over the reigns at Cleveland GC, Redcar. Ian has already received loads of help from Les and the other lads at the club and he has asked me to thank them publicly. Ian's place is to be taken by Kevin Scarce, who returns to Bedale after a spell at Easingwold. Good luck to you both.

Alan Reed (Saltburn GC) and Barry Walker (City of Newcastle GC) recently figured in the final of the TSL darts competition, held at Castle Eden Cricket Club. Alan lost to Glen Baxter (South Shields GC) in the semi final. Barry won his semi final beating Andrew Cook of Medomsley Cricket Club. In a fantastic best of five leg final the standard of play was top class. Glen, a Super League player, and Barry, a former Durham County player, served up some great games. However, Barry's lack of competitive tournament play resulted in a deserved 3-0 win to Glen. Glen received the inaugural 'Champions Shield' and a cheque for £100. Barry received the 'Runners Up' medal and a cheque for £50. Finally Alan received his 'Finalists Medal' and a cheque for £20. Thanks are due to Castle Eden Cricket Club for their hospitality on the night. They provided Pie and Peas for everyone and then Kevin Carr of TSL organised a Domino Handicap for us visitors and the regulars. With over £30 at stake the competition was fierce. Karen Hopper of TSL beat one of the locals in the final. All the best. Any news: 07831 214879 Terry El Prez Charlton

#### Midland

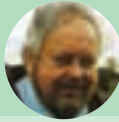
Firstly, my apologies for the lack of notes last month - Such was down to my lateness of submission and a problem with my broadband provider. It happens! Last month's calendar page was sponsored by our old friends and long-suffering supporters of the Section, Bathgate Leisure. Our greatest of thanks to them.

I have just realised that my phone number as printed within our blue programme for 2007 is incorrect, please use the one as printed within our calendar: 07908421015. Sorry for any inconvenience. Ed, you had better check the voicemails on my old phone, you may be some time (if only!). This month's calendar page is sponsored by our young friends and short-suffering supporters of our Section, Rigby Taylor/Tony Cheese. Our greatest of thanks to them. Rigby's have in fact been supporters of the Section for more years than I can remember.

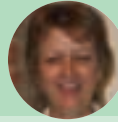
Another supporter over many a year has been Mr R. Minton. Richard has taken a position outside of the greenkeeping remit. Our best of wishes to you, and many thanks for your support over the years.

The closing date for the Scotts Doubles is May 8, the draw is to be held at Ludlow GC on May 9. I understand that a few of you have not received an entry form. My advice is to firstly question your local postal sorting office. Secondly, if you have read these notes in time and wish to enter contact Rhys Thomas (Comp Sec) on: 0775581615. Please remember that late entries are at his discretion and may well be out of his hands, but you might as well try. Also those who have not received entry forms for any other events please contact me and I shall be pleased to send you one in the post.

I'd better rap it up - I'm in danger of sending these notes in late. Just time to welcome six new members: Ian Cureton, John Meade, Andrew Wilkinson, Ian Turley, Craig Souter and Daniel Rowe. Also don't forget our summer event at Coventry GC on July 4 at 2pm. Entry closing date: June 8. See you there. Sean McDade



Clive Osgood  
SOUTH EAST  
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Jane Jones  
SOUTH WEST AND WALES  
Tel: 01454 270850



**SOUTH EAST**

**Berks/Bucks and Oxon**

Easter and Augusta! The King Pins walked off Augusta National much the same way they came on it, two by two, wrapped up against the cold. Their misery finally over, they trudged into the scorer's hut where the carnage could be tallied. If this is the new, improved Augusta National, welcome to the world of fewer birdies and more bogeys as Tiger and the best golfers in the world, reminding us at times of the human side to battling the beautifully manicured fairways with billions of trees and oceans of water, to threaten wayward balls. It seems that, with greens as fast as lightning and course changes implemented several years ago, gone are the days of 20 under par and Oh look - I nearly managed level par! This year I really enjoyed watching a tournament that became unpredictable with the beauty of the course and the beast playing together as one to provide a challenging climax to this major event. To combat the cold this year, I wonder whether Augusta have ordered any of those new solar plants from Venezuela?

Anyway welcome to May! Our first event this year is on May 17, at Wycombe Heights GC, which by the time you are reading this is nearly upon us, so be quick and check out the new web page at: [www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk](http://www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk) for all the last minute information. If you haven't already done so, get on the blower and welcome our newest member of the first time dad club, Phil Plater, from Magnolia Park GC, who is the proud dad of newly arrived daughter, Mia Annabelle, who weighed in at 5lb 12oz. Congratulations to Phil and his wife, Jan, who apparently played an important role in the birth.

Alec MacIndoe has recently lost his football shirt while playing his beloved game, if anyone comes across a green and white garment with hoops on it, can they please forward the Celtic shirt to Newbury and Cookham GC where Alec has promised a reward for the kind hearted soul.

Section Secretary, Dean Jones, can always be contacted on: [d.jones51@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:d.jones51@tiscali.co.uk) for any news or views, or just to log your new email address if it has changed. Dean can also be contacted through the BB&O web page. Wishing you all a good start to the summer season.

Mark Day

BB&O, Chairman's Message:

As we fast approach a new greenkeeping season, I thought it appropriate to send you my best wishes for the oncoming year. I am sure that for many of you the winter has been quite problematic due to the high levels of rainfall. However, now that the weather seems to be settling down somewhat I expect that you will all be feeling more in control, so good luck to you all.

Good news from your committee that the new BB&O website is well into the final stages of design and will be available shortly. The site will be full of up-to-date information regarding the Section, making communication much easier, so we hope you all enjoy it and welcome any ideas for future improvements.

Finally we extend a warm welcome from the Section to Chris Lomas MG and 10 of his colleagues from The Berkshire GC. We look forward to seeing you soon. Please try to support your Section throughout the season as often as you can, as we have some wonderful days organised for your benefit and enjoyment. Best Wishes

Sid Arrowsmith MG

**Surrey**

Friday, April 6. Hello readers and welcome to another quota of the Surrey Section's belated news gossip and intrigue. We start with news. Dave Langheim has now officially gone into shorts from April 2, while my eight year-old grandson is now old enough to wear long trousers. Gareth Roberts has had another very successful charity day at Hankley Common GC, in aid of Autistic Children and has raised over £12,000. A fantastic achievement on a day that was really warm and sunny. I was fortunate to be able to play in this event along with my usual partners Phil, Winchester Machinery; Greg, West Surrey GC, and Mark, Cranleigh GC, and for the fourth year running managed to enter the frame coming 4th. However, should any one of them want to bet money against you in a putting competition at a maximum distance of 18 inches, jump at the chance you'll make a fortune! Barry Robertson has had an operation on something but he is keeping the something secret until it heals or falls off.

Surrey Section's first golf event was a great success at Dukes Meadows GC on March 23. Although a few of the early starters had some showers most of the teams enjoyed dry conditions, apart from those, like me, who could not resist the overpowering necessity to pop the odd ball into one of the well stocked lakes, much to the amusement of my playing partners. The winning teams were 1. Darren Lee, Dean Churchill, Daren Pearl and Andy Reason; 2. David Gerson, Rodney Friend, Hany Abbas and Des Folliard; 3. Bobby Rogers, Andy Dennis, Adam Watts and Gregory Sutton.

The Nearest the Pin winners, who must have played really well to have got so near to pins in exceptionally difficult positions, were Brian Willmott on the 1st and my fellow team member Roger Tydeman on the 9th. As there was no gossip or intrigue I finish with a tale of exceptional coincidence that happened when I played in a two ball at Epsom GC a week after Dukes Meadows. On the 3rd par three tee, we were held up and a single player, who we did not know, caught us up. I invited him to join us and he did. Having introduced ourselves we talked about golf and where we had played recently. I mentioned to him what a delightful and well-kept par three course Dukes Meadows was and that it was ideal for improving one's short game. He said that his son had played there last week in a BIGGA tournament and I asked him where his son worked. Croham Hurst GC he replied. So I was able to say that his son's name was Tom. That then surprised him for the coincidence was that his son Tom was the fourth member of my team at Dukes Meadow and was only bought in as a substitute at the last minute. It was the first time I had played with Tom and the first time I had played with his dad, Steve, a two handicapper and a member at Epsom GC.

If you have any odd experiences that you think the readers will be interested in, please, don't tell me, keep them to yourself, and bore the wife.  
Brian Willmott

**Kent**

Hi Guys, hope you're well and the dreaded "Augusta Syndrome" has settled down at your respective courses. It was great to see such a fantastic

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tournament despite the controversy surrounding how the hallowed course has been altered to nullify the effect of the advances in technology on the equipment and the athleticism of the players. The debate about the rights and wrongs of it all will, no doubt, surface year on year as the powers that be in the US do their best to belittle the best golfers in the world.

Kent Section recently played our Spring Tournament at the Kings Hill GC. Many thanks to Duncan Kelso and his team for providing such a great course and to all who attended on the day. The warm day threatened to have us all boiling over but the ubiquitous Vic Maynard and his faithful refreshment buggy came to the aid of many a weary golfer. Many thanks to Vic, and Ernest Doe's, for supplying this essential service again.

Despite the pressure of this event being our National Qualifier and the enforced three-quarters handicap, some good scores were returned at the end of this very challenging course. I'm just glad we got to play it before the rough got to its full height!

Full results were as follows: 1. Wayne Syers, Lullingstone GC, 37 pts; 2. Dan McGrath, North Foreland GC, 36 pts. Both of these players have qualified for the National finals so good luck to them there! 3. Rob Holland, Birchwood Park, 34 pts; Longest Drive, Dan McGrath; Nearest Pin 8th, Dan McGrath; Nearest Pin 11th, Neil Pullen; Trade prize went to Stewart Clayton, of Midlube. Many thanks again to everyone at Kings Hill for a great day and also to all our trade supporters who were kind enough to donate raffle prizes.

Our next event will be held on June 12 at the Westgate and Birchington GC at Westgate on Sea. Please check our website for entry forms and up to date news on all forthcoming events. Please contact me with any news from the Section or to leave a message on our forum board when you visit us at: [kentgreenkeepers.co.uk](http://kentgreenkeepers.co.uk)

Rob Holland

## Sussex

Sorry for not writing last month but there was not a great deal going on. Since then we have had the Gentlemen's Dinner at Walton Heath, which was a great day. The weather was in our favour and the course was exceptional. It's the first time I have played at Walton Heath and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It's certainly a challenge. A big thanks to Ian McMillan and his staff for providing the course in such great order. Also a big thank you must go to Clive Osgood, who organised the day for us all to enjoy.

I did receive a phone call from Dave Hinks (Nick Faldo to his friends) about some machinery he had stolen from Peacehaven golf club. It actually happened during work hours while Dave was busy in another area of the course. When he returned to the sheds someone had broken the padlock off and stolen two trimmers from his sheds, one was a Stihl and the other an Allen. This all happened between 14.05 and 14.30. I know he is a bit annoyed about it and if anyone did have any information he would be grateful.

I have given you the dates of golf days but here they are again: May 24 - Ham Manor; early July - Cophorne; August - Surrey v Sussex; September 13 - Cooden Beach and also Sussex v Kent - TBA. I hope to see you at some of the golf days this year. If you need to contact me please call: 07776223234 or email: [robert.hudson77@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.hudson77@btinternet.com)

Rob Hudson

## London

Hello to you all in the London Section. I hope you are all ready for the busy season ahead!

Not a great deal of news to report from the area. I would like to welcome back to greenkeeping Craig Handyside, who has joined our Old Fold Manor team. I will report on the Brookman's Park Spring meeting in next month's ATG, as we have not played the event at the time of writing this report. Please remember these dates of the forthcoming events: Summer Meeting, Gerrard's Cross GC, Thursday, August 16 tees from 1.45pm; Turkey Trot Meeting (Scotts Trophy), Porters Park GC, Wednesday, December 12 tees from 10am; Paintballing, Saturday, June 9 at Bricketwood. Anyone wishing to partake, the fee is £10 including lunch. This does not include cost of paintballs. Contact London Section Secretary, Aaron Percival on: 07966 247913 - there are limited spaces left.

Finally, if you have any information e.g. achievements, good or bad news, or anything interesting, please let me know on: 07818410333, thank you. Matt Plested

## Essex

Well if you didn't already know. We now have our own Section website: [www.essexbigga.co.uk](http://www.essexbigga.co.uk) set up by Tom Smith, from Colne Valley (Thanks Tom). We will be posting the latest information on the site to keep you all up to date with what we are doing in the Section, plus what is going on around the county, mainly information from head office - Other news as it arrives. Information on the golf days will be posted along with your tee off times and other relative information of the day, how to get there etc. If you see anything you would like added, the committee can take a look at it and maybe add in your requirements. If you have anything constructive that you want aired on the website or if you have any equipment for sale, let Martin Forrester know and we will see what we can do for you.

Just a note, if anyone has moved or has not been getting correspondence from the Section, please notify Martin Forrester on: 07984-867.939 or: [mdwforrester@hotmail.com](mailto:mdwforrester@hotmail.com). Don't forget the forthcoming Essex BIGGA v Trade cricket match, on Thursday, May 17 at Brookweald Cricket Club, Weald Road, South Weald Park, Brentwood, Start time is 2.30pm. Information

from Ian Wood on: 01708 746157 or: 07952470861 or email ian.wood@romfordgolfclub.co.uk, come along and enjoy the fun, There is a bar open all afternoon and evening.

Robert Bell has moved from Five Lakes after four and a half years, to take over the running of San Roque Club, Spain, a 36-hole complex as Course Superintendent, it's not that far from Gibraltar, so the warmer climate should suit him and his family. I wish them all well, I'm sure he will not miss the cold north sea weather he's got used to of late. His First Assistant, James Ramey, has moved five or so miles west, after 23 years at Five Lakes (Quietwaters), to Braxted Park as Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper, we hope he will be happy there and hopefully join us at a few of our golf days and seminars.

Our Southern STRI Region Agronomist, Stella Rixon, has just given birth to a little girl whom she has named Niamh (an Irish name pronounced 'Neve') she was born on March 8 "in a hurry - only four hours of labour - lucky me!" Said Stella. Weighing in at 6lbs 7oz.. Well done Stella.

Anyone who has any news for inclusion in ATG can email me at: highwoods.photographic@virgin.net or call me on: 01206 852353  
Arnold Phipps-Jones

**South West**

Some good news to start. Tim Needham, Deputy Course Manager at Chipping Sodbury (and an ex-assistant of mine), has just become a father. Daughter, Isabella, arrived safely at 7lb 4oz and Tim, having done all the hard work, is now taking time out to recover at home. Richard Louisson, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Cirencester got married recently. His Best-Man, Graeme Percival, himself an ex-greenkeeper, secretly distributed door keys to various male guests arriving at the reception. While making his speech, he touched on the fact that the new Mrs Louisson was now a married woman, and anyone still with a front door key to her flat had better give it back immediately. To Richard's amazement and horror, several dozen people promptly stood up. What are friends for after all? Rob, our youngest, and I were down at Cannington College the other day. We had the great pleasure of meeting with Steve Hasell and Jon MacDonald who run the golf studies. We had a very good look at the facilities, as Rob is interested in the Foundation Degree. The golf side of things has come a very long way recently. The golf course is very well equipped, enthusiastically managed by Hugh Murray, and looked in extremely good condition for the time of year. Steve Hasell wrote the following especially for inclusion in the magazine.

Bridgwater College, from October 2007, is running, at our Cannington Centre in conjunction with BIGGA South West, the NVQ level 3 in Sport Turf and Greenkeeping. This new format allows flexibility for trainees to attend college only one day per month with additional support from our work-based assessors to get the trainees through their portfolios. The course is run over two years starting this October and will run until March 2008 when you can then get back to concentrating on your golf course work. The second year will start in October 2008 and you should complete by March 2009 with your

Level 3. Contact the college for more information on: 01278 655083 or: macdonaldjo@bridgwater.ac.uk. This course is free to those under 25 who do not possess their Level 3 and is only £350 per year for those over 25.

The college has received unprecedented investment into new greenkeeping machinery in the last two years, and also the appointment of a New Section Leader for the Horticulture and Sports Turf Department, Jonathan MacDonald, who worked at Reaseheath as well as Moulton College. A new Programme Manager for Sports Turf provision and a new Manager of Golf have been appointed to strengthen delivery of the courses which range from NVQ to Foundation degrees and to help provide a first class driving range, academy and 9 hole 18 tee golf course. Apprenticeships in Level 2 Sports Turf and Greenkeeping remain popular and are free to 16-18 year olds and our Foundation Degree in Golf Course management, which is run two days a week for two years full time (part time routes available.)

Marc Haring has a number of training courses and information days in the offing – please ring or mail Marc at march@cumberwellpark.co.uk for more details. Nobby Knight sends a final appeal to respond if you want to be on the mailing list, and to receive details of the Section Events. We are not in a position to be able to send out 290 entry forms for every event, so by not responding, you run the risk of not being informed. You can email Nobby on: nobbyknight384@hotmail.com Anyone wishing to play the team events contact Wayne Vincent: 07958630590.

Back at Minch, Abbots have finished the irrigation installation to everyone's great relief. Despite the weather a fantastic job has been done (providing it works okay) and you can hardly see where they've been. I do not intend to repeat this experience again – ever.

My recent PowerPoint talk to Box Gardening Club went down a storm. Things got off to a slightly rocky start when I arrived at Box Village Hall about half an hour early. When I pulled up outside, all the lights were ablaze, and the car park jammed to overflowing. Blimey I thought, I'm late - all these people have turned out on a freezing cold night to listen, and I'm late. So I grab all my kit, computer, projector, and screen, and go puffing off inside. When I open the front door, the main hall is totally deserted. It looks a bit like the Marie Celeste – not a stick of furniture, not a single person in sight, almost a ball of tumbleweed blowing gently about in the corner. So I tiptoe towards the second, smaller room. As I approach the door, a woman in an overall type uniform pokes her head out. "Thank God for that - the cleaners", so as she looks a bit slow, I talk loudly and clearly. "I'm with Box Gardening Club", I bellowed across the hall – and with that I notice shadowy shapes of people lying on mats on the floor behind her. She's running the local Pilates class and they're all meditating in some sort of trance, or at least they were until I went blundering in.

Paul Worster

**South Coast**

The South Coast Section Seminar 2007, was held at Canford Magna GC on Wednesday, March 14. Over 100 people attended what was a very successful day. It was also good to welcome some IOG members to the day. Chris Bitten, our Secretary, put together an excellent programme.

The AM session focused on the very important topic of water and irrigation.

Marcus White kicked off the day with a very in depth talk regarding winter water storage. This included much detail of reservoir planning and construction. His knowledge of the subject really shone through. Much of the planning process with such a project must go via the Environment Agency (EA), so it was apt to have Jim Whatley from the EA talk to us regarding this subject. Jim found it very useful to get out of the office and gain feedback from people within our industry. Before lunch Andy Cole, of Professional Sportsturf Design (PSD), communicated a superb talk regarding soil water. Andy used to be a lecturer in turf culture at Warwickshire College and it showed. His talk was thoroughly informative.

After a super lunch, it was a pleasure to welcome two well respected Head Groundsmen, Peter Craig and Eddie Seaward. Peter is from the Hurlingham Club which features croquet, lawn tennis, cricket and bowls plus gardens. Peter took us through the maintenance year at the Hurlingham Club – never a dull moment – a very busy man. Eddie, from the All England Lawn Tennis Club, gave us a fascinating insight into the year at the famous tennis club. We were blessed to have such a respected personality at our seminar – he is a true professional.

The committee and Section would like to offer our thanks to all the presenters helping to make the day a major success. We also thank Canford Magna GC once again making us welcome and looking after us, in particular Alain Sainval (Clubhouse Manager) and his staff. Also much gratitude to our sponsors for the day, Tower Chemicals, Banks Amenity and Vitax. Well done Chris Bitten with the organising of your first seminar.

To keep the seminar a success we need to know what you want, for example, topics, certain speakers etc. Chris Bitten will contact you with a questionnaire requesting such information. Please respond so that we know what to aim for in the future.

The final of the Jim Fry pairs was between Tony Gadd and Fred Deamen vs Steve Privett and Simon Justice, at Remedy Oak GC, on Wednesday, April 4. And, the winners...team Alresford. Congratulations to Steve & Simon (Steve have you worked out how to get your name into next month's magazine?) Thank you to Robert Hogarth and team for the great condition of the course. The Scotts/BIGGA Management Trophy will take place at Stoneham GC on May 31. Each golf club that enters a team must make up a four ball which must include a member of their greenkeeping staff, the other three must be members of the Clubs Management e.g. Secretary, Chairman, Chairman of Green, President etc. This is reasonably flexible as long as a greenkeeper is part of the team. The cost per team is £90. The prizes include individual rewards plus £200 of Scotts products for the winning Golf Club. To book please contact Jane Jones on: 07841 948001.

That's it for this month – speak to you again soon.

Joe Crawley Tel: 07721 389200

### Devon and Cornwall

On March 7, the Section held its first workshop of the season at Trenthorne GC in Cornwall and consisted of three topics on the following subjects: Drainage and Construction – Land Drainage Contractors Association (LDCA); Health and Safety; Environmental Issues.

The Section had an excellent turn out and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the speakers that participated i.e. Nigel Wyatt, Director of M J Abbot; Bruce Brockway, from LDCA, and Jon Allbut.

A huge thank you also goes to Trenthorne GC and in particular, Jon Granger, the proprietor, for making us so welcome, and Justin Austin, Course Manager, for all his hard work in making the day so successful. On March 14, we had the last of our season's meetings, and what a day it turned out

to be, brilliant weather, just like the middle of summer, the Church course was in superb condition and the lunch was outstanding.

Two competitions were run on the day, The Vitax Trophy for Head Greenkeepers and the Bayer Cup for the First Assistants. The winners were as follows: Vitax Competition – 1. Steve Evans, Yelverton Golf Course, 43pts; 2. Andrew Dunston, Newquay GC, 34pts; 3. Paul Newcombe, East Devon GC, 32pts. Bayer Cup – 1. S Green, Torquay GC, 41pts; 2. G Deakins, St Enodoc GC, 35pts; 3. G Moore, Launceston GC, 34pts. The prizes were presented by John Mullons, from Vitax, and Paul Clifton, from Bayer. In the afternoon Sarah Taylor, the Penhale Ranger from The Natural Environmental Services, presented the Educational talk and very entertaining it was too. As it was St Enodoc, a Championship Course, we had a full house. A huge thank you to Stuart Dymond, Course Manager, and all his staff for presenting both course in excellent condition.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Graeme Gallimore to our Section committee, Graeme is the Head Greenkeeper at Launceston GC, and he will run the education side, so I am sure he will be contacting you some time in the near future.

Last, but not least, please will you make a note in your diary that the mid-summer meeting will be held at Trethorne GC on June 14, a nine-hole golf competition will be followed by a barbecue and then ten-pin bowling. As I write this report I am looking out of the window at bright blue skies, and the temperature is just hitting 18 Celsius, and if this is only April, we will have a hot summer. The media seems to think so, so good luck with the automatic watering systems.

Donovan O Hunt

### South Wales

Hi lads, me and my big mouth! I wanted dry weather, well I got it big time, trouble was it had our old friend, Mr North East wind with it, last month we had loads of grass and could not cut it, this month we could cut it if we had it! Who would be a greenkeeper.

By now you should have had your fixtures and forms so fill them in and get them back. May 23 is the start of our fixtures so lets see if we can have a few more of you attending, we need your support, it's getting that there's more trade than greenkeepers, even if you don't play golf you can have a walk around the course and meet friends old and new, and have a few beers and listen to other peoples troubles - then sometimes yours don't seem so bad. Don't forget to let Peter know in advance if you are coming or it will cost you more on the day. I would like to say thank you to Dave Cary, I now it was last year but he turned up for a charity walk that about 20 of us did for my wife's cancer charity around Porthcawl in fancy dress, he turned up as Steve Irwin (crocodile hunter), thanks again mate from Norma and myself. One last thank you from Ceri Richards to all the people who turned up at their seminar to make it a great success.

That's it from me for another month, hope you have all got your water systems up and running without too many problems, if anyone fancies getting their name in print get in touch either by email: henry@henrystead.wannadoo.co.uk or ring me on: 07962162044 and remember, keep smiling.

Henry Stead

### Section Notes -

Can all notes be emailed to: melissa@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of the month prior to publication please. Suggested word guide: 500