



News from the Chief Executive

Merger talks with the IOG continue, albeit slowly. In August representatives of both organisations met to progress the report that will be submitted to members of both BIGGA and IOG for their consideration. To date the Group has not found any major reason why a merger could not work, although there are key issues yet to be resolved. The most significant of these is the question of location of the resultant headquarters and the staff structure. Progress is slow and has been hampered by the inability of the Group to make final decisions for inclusion in the report. While BIGGA representatives have been empowered by their Board to take whatever action is deemed necessary, IOG representatives do not enjoy the same privilege and must consult their Board at every stage. This inevitably causes delays and frustration. The recommendations of the working party, which need to be supported by each Board of Management, can only be adopted following a vote by members in accordance with respective Constitutions. The next meeting is scheduled for October 4, by which time both boards will have had routine meetings and thereby time to consider next steps.

You may know of the European Parliament draft proposal to restrict/potentially totally ban, the use of pesticides in all areas to which the public has access, this would include golf courses. The next stage is a vote, this is likely to happen in late October. There is an action group, 'The Amenity Forum' made up of representatives from a diverse range of organisations and businesses, including BIGGA with Ken Siems (Loch Lomond GC) and Gavin Robson (Burton GC) taking an active role. I'm also in regular contact with the Forum's Chairman, Jon Allbutt, and Secretary, Bob Joyce. Following consultation with its members the Amenity Forum has submitted to a number of MEP's a report on the consequences of such action, highlighting the effect on the economy, employment and people's lifestyle.

I was pleased to be involved in the judging of Toro Student of the Year last month. The eight finalists who made the trip to BIGGA HQ, were of an exceptionally high standard. Congratulations go to overall winner, Avon Bridges. To get as far as the final is no mean feat, every year the standard seems to get better.

Staff changes: Ken retired at the end of September after 13 years service as BIGGA's Education and Training Manager and also latterly as my Deputy. Ken has been instrumental in transforming the provision of Education and Training to both members and staff of BIGGA, there is no doubt many greenkeepers wouldn't have progressed as they have had it not been for his impact on their careers. Most of his duties have been taken over by Sami Collins who became Head of Learning and Development on October 1. Sami has been with the Association for 14 years and has more recently acted as Ken's understudy. Rachael Duffy will be working along side Sami, I hope you will give both of them your support. Sandra Raper has joined BIGGA HQ as my Secretary but will also give administrative support to the office generally. Her arrival has already had a positive impact on the office.

Congratulations to Stephen Coates and his wife Emma on the safe arrival of their daughter. He thought it would just be his role as BIGGA's Accountant that would keep him awake at night!

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH – CENTRAL

On behalf of all members of the Section, we wish to pass on our condolences and best wishes to the families and friends of Mick Hanlon and Alan Holmes who passed away recently. I did not know them personally, but from the number of calls I've had, and the sentiments expressed, it is clear they were both held in the highest regard by their colleagues in the profession and all trade representatives.

A short set of notes this month due to pressures of work, and our Chairman's golfing calendar being rather full. (More events than the European Tour!) We'll see if all this practise pays off at the Autumn Tournament or The National Championship (8/9th October)

A nice dry spell of weather recently has certainly helped conditions on the course, and also stopped everyone moaning about how wet a year it's been. I even heard some guys starting to complain about how dry it was – Long may it continue.

We have organised a short presentation courtesy of our friends from the States who were kind enough to share their experiences and knowledge with us last year also. Let's have a good turnout for this again. The topics should be of interest to us all, and I'm sure they have a lot of interesting information to pass on.

Presented by Mike Fidanza, John Kaminski & Stan Zontek – USGA Green Section.

Location - Elmwood Golf Course, Maintenance Facility, Training Room. Time: 6.30pm, November 28. Free of charge. If you're not a member come along and see what we have to offer. Hope to see you all there for an informative evenings education. Check the website for further details.

Scotsturf is looming, and I'm sure we will all bump into each other again. This year has flown by. The Section AGM will be held on October 29 at Elmwood Golf Course Training Room, at 1.30pm. Please come along and air your views, and support your fellow greenkeepers.

All the best

Secretary: Andy Mellon

Chairman: Derek Scott

www.biggacentralsection.org.uk 01334 658914

EAST



I start this month's report with the news that John Eadie, Head Greenkeeper at Bathgate, has retired after many years loyal service. He commenced his working life in 1960 on a farm before joining Scottish Landscapers in 1971 where he worked his way up to the position of Contracts Supervisor. In 1992 he joined the greens staff at Bathgate working initially for Head man Stuart Cruickshank and then for a short

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period as Deputy to Graham Hobbs. In March 1995 he was promoted to Head Greenkeeper a position he has held until his recent retirement. I am sure all in the Section will join me in wishing John a long and happy retirement.

The new man in charge at Bathgate is Robert Burns who until his promotion held the position of Deputy at the club. He commenced his career at Deer Park, where he worked under the guidance of an old friend of mine, Jim Brown. In 1996 he left Deer Park on a free transfer to his present club. Employed as an Assistant he was promoted to Deputy Head in 1997. Having worked closely with John during the past 10 years I am sure Robert will prove a worthy successor. Incidentally for those of you who may not have heard, Jim Brown is now employed as General Manager on a private estate near Carnoustie.

Colin Noble, Head Greenkeeper at Peebles, married Katy in August. The wedding and reception for 200 guests were held at Kailzie Gardens. The guests included greenkeeping staff from Peebles and Colin's old club at Cardrona. The happy couple's honeymoon to Mexico had to be cancelled owing to the hurricanes so they spent one week cruising in the Mediterranean and another in Majorca.

There are two golf events to report this month, both being held at West Linton Golf Club which is in magnificent condition at present. The first, the Willie Woods Tournament was held on Thursday, August 23, when 24 played. The winners aided by a fair amount of inside knowledge were (you've guessed it) Chris Yeaman and his Club Captain, David Buchanan. Our thanks go to West Linton for granting us courtesy of the course and to Chris and his team for the excellent preparation of the course. The final plaudit must go to the catering staff, who put on a banquet fit for a king.

Less than 48 hours later a large number of greenkeepers turned up again at West Linton to swell the numbers and compete in the 6th Annual Christopher Yeaman Junior Charity Tournament. The beneficiaries of this year's event were the Birmingham Children's Hospital Liver Unit and the Child Brain Injury Trust, which supports children with an acquired brain injury and their families. Funds raised from the day are estimated at £4,200 bringing the total raised during the past six years to almost £27,500. The Yeaman family would like to thank everyone who contributed financially or otherwise and helped to make the event such a success.

In closing, by the time you read this I will be in Crete. However, this year it is more likely to be paint pot and brush in hand, rather than the usual beach bed and cold beer!

Mike Dooner



NORTH

Here we are in October already. Hope your autumn renovation programmes are all going well and you're getting plenty of seed in the ground.

The weather through September was slightly better with a few glimpses of the sun. The results from the autumn meeting at Fortrose will be in next month's issue.

The committee have had discussions about the format for the AGM in October. We normally run it on the basis of an outing but the attendance figures in the last few years has been poor. We feel it is not viable or cost effective to send out 250 forms to the members and only get 20 replies. Having the AGM so close to the autumn meeting is not ideal either, so this year we are going to have the AGM at Peterhead GC on November 1. The format for the day will be arrival at 9.30-10am for a bacon roll and coffee. Golf will be available to those who want to play with the AGM following afterwards with soup and sandwiches available as a light lunch. There will be no forms sent out to you, so you just need to put this date in your diary and turn up on the day for some golf and the AGM. This will be free of charge to all members and trade so hopefully it will result in a few more coming on the day. We realise that people are busy or are on holiday so maybe this format will allow people to just turn up on the day if they are available.

It is with regret that I report the death of Alan Holmes, who was Course Manager at Blairgowrie GC. Alan was only 59 but had health problems for the past few months. Alan went to Blairgowrie in 1991 after being on the Kings and Queen's courses at Gleneagles. He was well known in our industry and will be a sad loss to the green keeping world. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

*Robert Patterson
Royal Aberdeen*



WEST

Welcome to this month's report, I would like to thank the West Section team who attended the Harry Diamond Quaich during July, it was a great day out enjoyed by all. Well done to Cecil George for organising the greenkeeping teams.

The Norrie Whytoch trophy was held at Aucterarder GC during July, well done to the West team who managed to finish second to last instead of the usual last, I didn't manage to play this year so that speaks for itself.

Archie Dunn and his staff had the course in first class condition and thanks to Peter Boyd for organising the day.

Job news, Gerry Bruen has returned to Scotland after a couple of years in Ireland. Gerry has taken over from Robert Johnston as Course Manager at Williamwood GC. Robert has taken up a new project, a course being built in the Ayrshire area and I would like to wish you every success with your new ventures.

The match against the club stewards will be played at Clobber GC on Monday, October 15, hopefully we can win back the trophy after losing out last year.

We hope to have our annual night out at the Comedy Club in Glasgow,

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dates and cost have still to be arranged. Members will be contacted with details as soon as I know.

On the football front Brian Hillan is keen to play any other Sections that are up for a challenge at 11-a-side you can contact Brian on: 07721610160.

Fairways Group held their open day at Irvine Bogside. It was very well attended with a wide range of machinery on view and for demonstration, many thanks to David Rae and his team for a first class day. To Derek Wilson, Course Manager and his staff, the course was in first class condition as a game of golf was played after the demonstration.

Over the winter period we hope to arrange some education courses on manual handling and fire safety and any other subjects may be accommodated. We also hope to hold a seminar October/November and members will be notified in due course.

The 2008 spring outing will be held over East Renfrewshire Golf Club on April 24, hopefully it will be a well attended day as it's a first class course. Well that's all for now see you next month.

Fraser Ross 07970 366 355



NORTH EAST

Recently vandals struck twice at Tyneside GC, firstly causing quite a lot of damage to the 6th green over the bank holiday and, in the same week, removed the seats from the club buggies bearing in mind that they are hinged not like they can just pick them up fortunately they were recovered by the police on the Ryton Willows.

On better news, at Tyneside GC I hear that they have received planning permission for staff accommodation not before time as they must have one of the worst facilities in the area and that's not just my view but other people further afield.

I have been informed by Tom Harrison, of Gosforth GC, that three members of his staff are joining the Section they being John Saunders, Chris Walker and John Lee. It's been along time since we have had that many greenkeepers from Gosforth. I hear that they liked the benefits that are on offer these days. Good luck lads I look forward to meeting at some point.

I see that Parklands GC has re-opened its new driving bays after major refurbishment and that the new crazy golf is open to the public, or is it called miniature golf these days, I'm not sure.

Jimmy Richardson



MIDLANDS – MIDLAND

Firstly let me apologise for the lack of notes last month. Such was due to a technical problem with my broadband provider. Our thanks to last

month's calendar sponsor Mark Rayner/Scotts. You can checkout their website for your fertiliser needs etc on: www.scottspromotional.co.uk Secondly thanks to Abbey Mowers for sponsoring this month's calendar. Their website being: www.abbeymowers.co.uk Our thanks to both of the above for their continued support over many a year. Please consider them in your thoughts; their contribution to our industry is invaluable.

For many years the committee has played for the committee cup annually. We were fortunate enough to be invited by David Ward to play this year's at the lovely course at Royal Porthcawl. What a course. The winner on the day unsurprisingly being our Chairman, E. Stant. Our thanks to Royal Porthcawl and David Ward and his team for affording such a great opportunity. Thank you.

I would like to congratulate Alan Strachan (C.M.), Eamonn Crawford(Dep) and their team at Royal County Down for the wonderful condition of the course there, for the Walker Cup. Never mind Sunningdale Alan, you have the best...

Sean McDade

Time is running out to book your places on the Irrigation Workshop and the Noise and Vibration Management Seminar. The Irrigation Workshop takes place on October 30 at The Belfry and the Vibration seminar a week earlier on October 24 at Gay Hill GC. The issue of vibration management is as clear as mud and we aim to offer guidance to our industry with the help of some expert speakers. Priced at just £15 you really can't afford to miss out. Book direct with BIGGA HQ.

Paul Woodham



EAST MIDLANDS

Not much to report this month besides the East Midlands Autumn Tournament and AGM which takes place on Thursday, November 1 at Birstall GC, Leicestershire. Tee off Times 10.30am until 12 noon. If entry forms have not been received by anyone please contact Dan Rodgers, Secretary on 07745 227224.

Dan Rodgers



EAST OF ENGLAND

For those who have been using the website I make no apologies for repeating this gem of information: Greenkeepers 3½ Trade 1½. C'mon Boys! Give us a game! Maybe we should all putt left-handed next year to give you a chance. Never mind lads, it was a good day, enjoyed by everyone and the banter was excellent.

As I write this, the Rugby World Cup is about to start. Hopefully my beloved Scotland can put up a good show this year. Winning it would be good, but there is more chance of the trade winning against the greenkeepers!



The Order of Merit is now finished. Overall Winner was Simon Bosset, Burghley Park. U25 Winner Ash Cox, Cleethorpes Golf Club, and, believe it or not, the Trade Winner was Gary Cooper, STG Supplies! Yes, it does say Gary Cooper. Well done to you all. Next up is the match with the Secretaries at Cotgrave. Hopefully another victory for the Section.

Finally, the team to play at Burton in the Midland Championship will be Les Howkins, Graeme MacDonald and Brian Robinson. Good luck lads and bring the Trophy home.

Allan Walker

www.eastofenglandbigga.com



BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

The next event will be the BB&O Clay Pigeon Shoot on October 18 at West London Shooting Targets. So, for those last minute entries and blunderbuss details, Jon Beck can be contacted on: 0790 999 7636.

Sharing greenkeeping knowledge and experience on October 31 will be the order of the day as the Section are hosting an educational seminar at Newbury & Crookham GC. The line up for speakers at this event will be Gerry Byrne, from the K Club, in Ireland, who played host to the 2006 Ryder Cup and many Smurfit European Opens.

David MacIndoe, from Killarney Golf & Fishing Club, who has hosted the Irish Open and Curtis Cup, Ian McMillan, from Walton Heath GC, who has hosted the US Open Qualifiers and Technical Director Mark Hunt, from Headland Amenity, will make the line up. Numbers for the day are limited to a maximum of 120 and are on a first come first serve basis, so please support this venue and get your entry forms in early to avoid disappointment.

Entry forms and further information for all events can be downloaded from the Section website, and hopefully by the time you are reading this details of the next event will be posted on the www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk

Congratulations to Bill Patterson, from Beaconsfield GC, who has attended the the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace after a personal invitation by the Queen, and before you say anything it was not for services to the Scottish whisky industry, but for Bill's generous services to the youth and local community work experience projects with learning difficulties. Well done Bill.

After Jon Ryan's stag night in Devon a new dance called the Tartan Triple has been taking the west country by storm. The craze started after Colin Wilson started to hand-mow the dance floor in a Torquay nightclub. Details of the new dance are available on the website. However, Colin is offering specialist instruction to this new dance, details of the stag night fortunately are not on the website. Congratulations to Jon and Joanna on their engagement.

Rob Surgey is leaving Wycombe Heights GC for pastures anew, and will be starting a new challenging position as Senior Course Manager at

Burhill GC. We wish Rob and his family a smooth move to the Surrey area and best wishes for the future.

The BB&O has a famed family of greenkeepers namely the Piggott clan who have reigned at Henley GC for many years and recently this year influential greenkeeper Peter Piggott has sadly died. Peter started his career at Henley GC in 1966 – 1989 and worked alongside his father, George, who was also Head Greenkeeper until his retirement in 1972 when Peter took over the reigns. Peter with his father and together with sons Brian and David led the way forward for the family into the world of greenkeeping. Peter trained on some of the first triple mowers and regularly used the overgreen, and if you are not sure what an overgreen is, find a very old greenkeeper.

Brian and David both started their careers at Henley GC under guidance from granddad George and Brian is now Head Greenkeeper at The Buckingham and David who has recently retired after many years as Head Greenkeeper at Leighton Buzzard GC. The camaraderie of the Piggott's at Henley were legendary and Peter was well known throughout the Region. Our thoughts go out to all the family.

Mark Day

mark.day@tacticgolf.com



MID ANGLIA

Hello chaps, it's that time again already, another month gone by and still no settled weather. I hope you have all coped with the continuous downpours and endless cutting.

Now for the results of the Summer Competition which was held at Welwyn Garden City GC in early August, 1. F. Whittle, Stocks,; 2. M. Frappell, Lamerwood; 3. G. Fenn, Beds and County; 4. P. Crouch, St Neots; 5. B. Cox, Welwyn G City.

M. Fance, Scotts, won the Trade Prize, D. Hodkin the Longest Drive, P. Larter Nearest the Green, (sorry the Pin) and finally a special prize for the Longest Walk was won by R. Saunders, from Mowsbury GC.

Our thanks go to Brett and his team for providing us with an excellent course and to W.G.City for their hospitality for the whole day. Also thanks go to Mark Day and Tacit for sponsoring the event and once again to all our other trade members who support our days come rain or shine. It was nice to hear from the Club Captain, Bill Williams, that BIGGA would always be welcome to hold competitions at W.G.City. You should have your entries in for the Autumn Competition, Berkhamsted GC, on October 17. This will be followed by the AGM. It would be good to see some new faces at the AGM as fresh input and ideas could help us to help you and the Mid-Anglia Section move forward.

I will say this again, the Texas Scramble is at South Beds GC on December 6, get those entries in early to avoid disappointment.

Steve Mason

Around the Green

SOUTH EAST – SURREY



Thursday, September 6. The green, green grass of home. The rain in Spain falls mainly on the green, green grass of home. That was August, that was summer and it was wet. But not on August 20, at Tandridge GC the sun shone on this excellent golf course and we thank Neil Baker and his greenkeepers for their hard work in producing great conditions for a great days golf. The food, as always, was devoured with gusto by the players and the injured Mark Harvey could not resist turning up later to enjoy a delicious dinner. The sponsors for the day were Tacit, and they were represented by a Senior Sales person who in remarkable condition for his age gave away the prizes to the winner, Les Salmon, who was also in remarkable condition for his age. Paul Bacon was runner up with Jason Hunt third, followed by Barry Cannon. Iain Dye, Deputy at Tandridge, won Longest Drive and Roger Tydeman was Nearest the Pin.

The next event is at Tyrrells Wood GC on December 13 followed by the AGM. Please remember that we need a new Chairman and he, or she, will be voted onto the committee during the meeting. Don't be shy, put your name forward, or nominate any intelligent fellow greenkeeper that you know. Today at Foxhills GC is the final of the Surrey Bowl knockout competition, sponsored by ETT, Environmental Turf Technology and due to start at 1.30pm. It is now 9.15am and I am sitting in front of my computer typing this month's news but as I have not been informed of any births or marriages the final paragraph in this edition will reveal the as yet unknown pair who have won that coveted Surrey Bowl Trophy. The finalists are Derek and Dan Walder against Gareth Roberts and Paul Bacon. The final did start on time and with every type of shot being demonstrated by the players, the Surrey Bowl trophy was presented by Richard Fortmuller, on behalf of ETT, to Gareth Roberts and Paul Bacon together with a voucher for £100 each and entry into the National Championship.

Brian Willmott brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk

KENT



Due to a mix up, the wrong notes were printed for this Section last month. Apologies for this.

I'll start this month's edition with a question for you all: Feedback. What does it mean to you and what do you do with it?

We all get feedback in some shape or form. All too often it is a complaint, sometimes it is a compliment. Either way it is valuable information that can be used to assess how we are serving our paying customers. We all know that golfers can be a bit naïve when it comes to the intricacies of maintaining a golf course so a complaint is often the result of this lack of knowledge. Compliments too, can come as the result of good fortune rather than a particularly skilful act of the greenkeeper, either way we need to be appreciative that the golfer has taken time to make his sentiments known and act on them accordingly. It is far easier to

educate one troublesome individual at an early stage than to wait until he has told all his friends an exaggerated version of events.

Acknowledgement on a personal level to anyone who wishes to pass opinion on your golf course is not only polite but vital to maintaining regular custom. If complaints are unheeded the golfers can think that you don't care. If positive comments are not acknowledged, that can be seen as the greenkeeper being ungrateful. Either way, the golfers will vote with their feet and if they aren't respected, they will take their business elsewhere.

The key is to listen to your golfers and, wherever possible, give them what they want as long as it is beneficial to the golf club. Nobody has a 'perfect' course, ask your members what they would like to see, be proactive in the development of your club and believe me, you'll find it a lot easier than trying to fight them on a daily basis.

On to life in Kent. A 10 man strong team of crack Kentish golfers welcomed a similar number of their Sussex counterparts to Birchwood Park for a golf match on August 22. A breezy but, fortunately, dry day, ensured an enjoyable occasion for all involved. Sussex were obviously worried even before the first shot was struck as the format of the match was hotly debated. Several different permutations were put forward and then "modified" by various Sussex members purely with the intention of leaving the Kent team with their heads spinning! By the time the final format of five two man teams playing a Texas Scramble Stableford had been decided upon, and Carol Vorderman had been booked to work out the scores, our team were pretty flummoxed!

A great game of golf ensued, not least in my match. Gary Tait and I took on the Singing Hills duo of Dan and Dave who were in perfect harmony as they clocked up an unbeatable 49 points. Despite playing reasonably well ourselves, amassing 44 points, we could not find a way to break their resolve and, as it turned out, a similar story was unfolding across the other games.

The Sussex team won the event by four matches to one with overall points tallies being 221 Sussex to Kent's 209. Everyone involved had a great day on a great course in a great atmosphere. Many thanks to Rob Hudson and his team for making it such an entertaining day and we look forward to the re-match!

By the time you read this we shall have played our autumn event at The Wildernesse Club. Look for news and results on our website now!

The Regional seminar is being hosted by us at the end of this month as I'm sure you're all aware by now. Details are also on the website.

Hopefully this month we shall be staging our first paintballing event. Although this will be among our own Kent members, preliminary talks with other Section secretaries suggest that future inter-county events are definitely on the cards! So get to the website now and register your interest and we'll see you on the battlefield!

Rob Holland

www.kentgreenkeepers.co.uk



SUSSEX

Hello again, sorry I missed last month's but there was not a great deal going on and I know you guys would be too busy cutting grass to read it!

The only event we have had is the Sussex verses Kent golf match which was held at Birchwood Park GC. I would like to thank Kent for their hospitality and also Rob Holland for hosting and organising the event. On the day it stayed dry but was extremely windy. The course was in great condition and Sussex came out on top winning 4-1.

Things to look forward to are the AGM with nine holes before, which is on November 1 at the Dyke GC. The golf will start at 12.30pm with the AGM starting at 4pm, there will also be a buffet tea after the golf. There is no charge for golf or tea so it should encourage a few more than last year. Remember it is your Section so come along and support it! Also there is the Turkey Trot on November 30 which will be held at Worthing GC, and will be sponsored by Avoncrop Amenity.

On the football front, we have got a match verses Surrey in mid October, which we are looking forward to especially as we have a new kit which will be sponsored by Rigby Taylor. so a big thanks to them and mike ring for making this possible.

My details are mobile: 07776223234 or email: robert.hudson77@btinternet.com so if you would like to play any of this events get in touch.

Rob Hudson



ESSEX

On a day with a weather forecast of heavy showers and high winds, we arrived for our Autumn Stableford Tournament at Colchester Golf Club. Fine sunny weather with a high of around 26° met the field of 56 players and although the wind did blow and the rain held off till we had started to eat, it was not as bad as the forecast. Colchester GC, celebrating its centenary year, had done us proud not only with the weather but also with a course set up to entertain. The course was in excellent condition and had been well manicured by Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Sam Cook, (in the absence, due to a holiday of Head Greenkeeper, Keith Chinnery). Sam's efforts were soon to be seen and well received, with some very tidy scores being carded. Vice Captain, Roger Robertson, said a few words after the dinner and gave praise to Sam and the team for all their hard work. I'm sure everyone there felt the same.

Winners were as follows: Overall - Ray Clarke, Channels, 37 pts; 1.1 Roland Hughes, Forrester Park Golf & Tennis Club; 1.2 Jamie Hughes, Forrester Park Golf & Tennis Club; 1.3 Antony Kirwan, Lexden Wood Golf Club. 2.1 Craig Serafin, Colchester Golf Club, 2.2 Malcolm Smith, Regiment Way Golf Centre; 2.3 Darren Stuttle, Frinton Golf Club; Nearest the Pin - Liam Springett; Longest Drive - Adam Vickery; Guest Prize - Dan Eke; Trade Prize - Michael Fance.

Banks Amenity Products sponsored the day and a big thank you goes to Simon Banks and his company for the fine prizes that were handed out.

Our thanks go to all the trade members who also helped with their support, enabling us to have a fine raffle table. The next event is the Winter Stableford Tournament, at North Weald GC. A full report on this event to be held at the end of September will appear in next month's magazine.

Christmas Texas Scramble AGM – November, 27 at Orsett GC. Teams of Four. Each team must comprise of at least two Greenkeeper members and then can be made up of anyone else, Trade, Guest or Greenkeeper. You choose and make up your own team. Antony will not be making the selections. It's up to you. Entries to Antony Kirwan, on the official entry forms please, with your entry fees. Any queries contact Antony on: 0707887780065 or by email: antz16@btinternet.com

Also anything you wish to bring up at the AGM should be with the Secretary in writing no later than the end of October, contact Martin Forrester, email: mdwforrester@hotmail.com

Anyone who has any news for inclusion in the "Around the Green" can contact me at: highwoods.photographic@talktalk.net or on: 01206-852.353 Please note the new email address.

Arnold Phipps-Jones www.essexbigga.co.uk



LONDON

Well, with an interesting summer just passed and Autumn on its way what will the following months have in store for us, whatever it may be its just another season to see what mother nature throws at us. Keep up the good work all.

Firstly congratulations to Dave & Emily with the arrival of baby Millie, who was born August 18th. Also congratulations to Matt Plested on recently getting married and his move on to pastures new.

On to the golf now where at Gerrards Cross GC there was a new trophy up for grabs.

The Rigby Taylor Trophy, well done and thank you to Joe and Gareth who provided us with some great prizes and not forgetting the coffee and bacon rolls, which I know, I certainly tucked into. I look forward to next years meet.

Thank you to Lee Robinson, his team of greenstaff and all in the clubhouse who provided us with a thoroughly enjoyable day.

The Results for the Rigby Taylor Trophy are: 1. Paul Simpson, Northwood; 2. Stuart Playle, Sandy Lodge; 3. Bill Geddes. The two Nearest the Pins went to Ian Boothby, Brookmans Park, and Pat Johnson, Sandy Lodge.

Aaron Percival

Around the Green

SOUTH WEST



Has anyone else had problems with Chafer grubs? The little so-and-so's really got going at Minchinhampton - Just on the eve of the English Mid Amateur over the Cherington Course. I couldn't believe it, beautifully manicured acres of golf course, and then areas looking like some nerk had gone mad with a rotavator. Bring on the Merit Turf next year! The members had to be informed what was going on, so I produced an A4 sized print of a chafer (cleverly downloaded from the internet) in all its glory, big enough detail to see in close-up all its pretty impressive mouth-parts and legs etc, together with an explanation for the damage around the courses. It was only a week later when the first golfer said something along the lines of "I never realised they were so big" and "no wonder they do so much damage". This was swiftly followed by members of the senior's section going round the course armed with pool cues and baseball bats just in case they met one in an enclosed space! - A case of too much information?

My phone has been ringing with queries like "help - what can I do with my lawn?" My stock answer is "move house mate - it's easier". Apparently the Lawn Thumbs and Green Doctors of this world are recommending Chlorpyrifos at £45 per 100m² lawn. Obvious experts there then. My personal advice is simply to keep the affected areas as tidy as possible, and re-seed when all is done. We are trying applications of garlic spray and have noticed that applications of gritty top-dressing are to an extent reducing the pecking and digging activities of birds and badgers etc. We've also noticed that the collars of tees are more severely affected than the tee-tops themselves. Could it be that a single annual application of Carbendazim disrupts chafers to an extent? Nematodes seem only effective as long as you can keep the area well-watered. Any feedback or observations would be welcomed, and I'll print them asap.

The Mid-Amateur Championship, hosted on the Cherington Course, (open to amateur players over the age of 35), was won by Colin Edwards, of Bath GC, with 68, 68, 70, over this tight par 71 course. He won by 6 shots from Gareth Bradley, of Bramhall. The course, measuring a relatively short 6450 yards really looked after itself in terms of scoring, only giving up 11 sub-par rounds all week; the tournament was played in bright sunshine (for a change) with light winds, and holding (but very fast) greens. Happily, that's the last big tournament for a while now so I'm looking forward to semi-retirement (or possibly a gap-year) in 2008.

I would just like to give congratulations to Dave Rosselli, and Adam Matthews (both well-known serial prize-winners in the SW Section events) on their promotion to Acting Deputy Course Manager, and Acting First Assistant Greenkeepers respectively at Minchinhampton. Look forward to working with you guys.

We're revving up for the Autumn Maintenance work now with hollow tining and verti-draining on the menu. We will probably verti-drain with big tines as deep as possible, and then follow up with a 5mm hollow tine operation which will help to close the vertidrain holes at the surface before overseeding with Bent, and top-dressing. I like to get a 4.0.10 fertiliser on 10 days prior, and add a seaweed soil amendment after we dress. How about some details of your preferred programmes?

I know that Saltex is "not one of ours", but it was nice to see the big companies back at this exhibition. We were thoroughly well looked after on the Ransomes Textron stand, and it was very nice to see a DVD of golf course environmental work being played. Of course, not everyone can spend lots of money every year - particularly this year, but I certainly took home new ideas and new initiatives from all of them. Also high profile was the Timberwolf stand - "Miss Timberwolf" who was only separated from the elements by a skimpy pair of shorts and a liberal coating of body paint was the obvious star of the show. Disappointingly however, after 10 minutes of earnest conversation it became glaringly obvious that she knew sod-all about compost making.

The Provisional Fixtures for 2008 include: Kingsdown - winter tournament; Clevedon - Spring Tournament; Minchinhampton Old - Greenkeeper Amateur; The Bristol - Summer Tournament and National Qualifying; Marlborough - AGM & Autumn Tournament; Weston Super Mare - Christmas Tournament.

Thanks to all the greenkeepers who assisted with the arrangements. See you all at Minchinhampton New on October 11 for this year's AGM.

Paul Worster
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SOUTH COAST

How the year has flown by! I think the summer, or the lack of it, has fast forwarded our year. As I put pen to paper I'm preparing for Saltex, the kids are going back to school, the football season is upon us again (come on you Irons!) and the Autumn Tournament at North Hants GC. It seems like only yesterday we received our fixture cards for the year. North Hants is a beautiful course and we very much look forward to the day which is October 23. I would recommend booking early. If you want to attend this or any of our Golf Days please contact Chris Sturgess on: 0777 313 8409 or send a cheque, made out to BIGGA South Coast, to Chris direct at his home address: 31 Bay Rd, Sholing, Southampton SO19 8EZ.

Congratulations to all the greenkeeper students who successfully passed their NVQs this year, in particular to George Cooper of Camford Magna GC who attended Sparsholt College and not only passed his NVQ2 in Sports & Amenity, but was also awarded Trainee of the Month for July. The certificate quoted "for his dedication and commitment to his work and employer. Well done George!

I would also like to wish Steve Robinson, of Blackmoor GC, all the best for his new position as Course Manager at Moortown GC near Leeds. Also all the very best to James Norris who will be taking over at Blackmoor.

If there are any other pieces of news like the two items above, please let me know on the number below so they can be included. Remember it's your Section, make use of it.

That's all for this month and I shall now finish off my packing for Saltex and by the time you have read this it will be a distant memory, and then



we can start thinking about (dare I say it) Christmas & Harrogate (BTME dates: Exhibition 22-24 January; Education January 20-24 2008)

Joe Crawley
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DEVON AND CORNWALL

Some important dates for this autumn: Wednesday, October 10 - Elfordleigh and AGM - please make every effort to come along. It is your chance to have your say in the way your Section is being run. If you are not happy with something please speak up and I promise you we will do our very best to sort it. If we get more than 60 members in attendance, I will personally get you all a drink! Tuesday, November 7 - Killiow Golf Club - Meeting and Educational Talk; Tuesday, November 15 - South West Cannington Seminar - "Golf in the Commercial World"

Our aim this year is to get the best speakers our industry can offer and this year's we have secured the services of Ecologist, Bob Taylor, from the STRI, and George Sheils, one of the country's leading Agronomists. I am sure you will agree that this is a fantastic start to our season.

A red hot topic at the moment, which has raised its head yet again, is our old enemy Green Speed. Demands from golfers for fast greens are at best unrealistic and at worst outright impossible to achieve long term without ruining your bent-fescue surfaces. If there are any of you out there who are suffering problems in relation to this or if you have overcome problems or you just feel you might have something useful to contribute, then please contact me. If we get enough replies we can meet up and discuss our problems and maybe help each other. The most important thing is not to suffer in silence. I have done this many times over the years and I can tell you now that a problem shared is a problem halved. We can only do something about this "speed" problem if we join together and create a big enough voice. Assistance from organisations such as the R&A and STRI would be great and if anyone associated with these organisations should be reading this, please give me a ring and I will tell you how you can help.

I think that will do for now. See you all at Elfordleigh on October 10.

Steve Evans
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SOUTH WALES

Finals weekend for us at the Grove this weekend (Sept 8) that followed by maintenance fortnight and it will be into the Autumn, I can't say I for one will be sorry to see this wash out of a summer over, although it did have its compensations (no hand watering).

On with the report and one piece off information that maybe of interest to some of you comes from our Vice Prez, Dave Ward, Royal Porthcawl) He informs me of a Links Forum which has been formed. The forum was put together by Dave, Peter Lacey and Richard Wyman, and has been held at Richard's club Burnham Berrow; the last meeting took place

on August 21 with 14 links staff from England & Wales in attendance also was Steve Isaacs, R&A.

The meetings are informal and cover all aspect off Links Management; anyone interested in attending should contact one of the above for more information. The R.T Knockout tournament is making progress with the following matches having been decided: G. Humphries & R. McDonagh, bt D.Jones & C. Jones; C. Thomas & J. Rees bt P. Lacey & H. Morgan; C. Campbell & J. Curtis bt L. Sellick & I. Wade; A. Roach & M. Davis bt D. Bray & L. Davis; P.Williamson & R. Davis bt M.Wilshire & M. Anderton; S.Jones & P. Thoma bt E. Nickels & L. Lunn; K. Jones & J. Probert bt G. Blum & G. Knight.

Ceri Richards, Avoncrop Amenity, has suggested having a charity golf day in aid of my wife's cancer charity in October at the Grove. If anyone would be interested please contact Ceri or myself, it would be teams of four and hopefully the trade would sponsor some prizes and Mr Mike Thomas, Grove GC, would let's us use the course, it would be a good day. Last but not least I would like to thank Neil Baldwin, Amega Science, for his time and efforts trying to sort out my dry patch and also Dave Carvey, R.T, thank you both.

That's it from me hope you are not to stressed out and remember always look on the bright side off life! Bye for now.

Henry Stead
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NORTHERN IRELAND

We held our Spring Golf Competition at Kilkeel GC on May 31. Conditions were ideal with blue skies and hot temperatures throughout the day. Head Greenkeeper, Gerry Bruen, and his staff had the course in superb condition which combined made our visit to Kilkeel a success. A big thank you to our competition sponsors, The Turfcare Group, who provided all the prizes. We would like to thank NI Sales Representative, Kyle Irwin, for all his support. Praise must also go to the bar and catering staff at Kilkeel GC, for all their hospitality and excellent service.

The results were: 1. Michael King, Royal County Down, 35pts; 2. Eamonn Crawford Royal County Down, 34pts; 3. Gary Crawford, Royal County Down, 33pts. Greenkeeper Non-Member Prize – John Adair; Nearest the Pin – Ken Henderson, Allen Park GC; Longest Drive – Michael Kennedy Royal County Down.

Ken Henderson

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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