



News from the Chief Executive

It's all change this month at BIGGA House with the arrival of the builders whose task it is to convert the array of downstairs offices into one large open office. We are all dreading the nuisance factor but the overwhelming feeling is one of support for the project and the main disruption should only last for three to four days. The work is scheduled to be completed by the end of April following which the GTC can move into part of the upper floor, bringing the two organisations much closer together but also bringing BIGGA some rental income to help offset overheads.

I seem to have done an excessive amount of travelling of late but it just happens to be that time of year when the industry takes advantage of a quieter time to host conferences. My latest visit, and last for some while, was to the Canadian Conference and Exhibition in Calgary. Coupled with this was an International Summit that attracted delegates from a variety of countries.

It was especially pleasing to meet Allan Devlin, from the Australian Association, who, as an ex-patriot of many years, found himself immediately at home in the company of the delegates from the UK and Canada. Ken Siems, Steve Isaac and our Chairman had all been invited over to give presentations that were very well received and that fitted well into the busy and informative schedule of education seminars that my counterpart, Ken Cousineau, and his staff had arranged. Our hosts could not have been more welcoming.

My personal thanks go to Ken Cousineau, Terry McNeilly, the CGSA Board and the great number of Canadian friends, too numerous to list, who made the trip a success not only for me but for the Association. The golf industry in the UK is going through testing times but these conditions are not confined to our shores. The same pressures are in evidence in Canada, Sweden and America and I wish Past President of the CGSA, Ian Martinusen and Dana, his wife, every success for the future. Ian was recently a victim of change at his golf club, in the same way that many have suffered in the UK, he has thankfully found employment as a technical representative.

While it is important that we develop strong relationships within the UK to try to protect and develop the better interests of our members it is also vital that we do not neglect the international aspect of the greenkeeping fraternity. There is much to learn from others as well as share our own experiences and there is no doubt about the fact that BIGGA is held in very high regard around the world. The international travel sounds wonderful and I do find it rewarding, both personally and for the Association, but it is also tiring, very demanding on home life, and the work back the office never disappears! I do what is necessary to promote the Association but the cynics among us will say that I would say that.

Finally I would like to wish Steve Mona every success in his new position as CEO of the World Golf Foundation based in Florida. Steve took over as CEO of the GCSAA 14 years ago and has been a great ally for BIGGA. I look forward to building on this relationship with Steve in his new role.

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH REGION – AYRSHIRE

Hello everyone, just a few items on the agenda for your perusal as we actually held a committee meeting at the end of February (crazy I know!).

Although not present at the Scottish National Conference myself last month, I have it on good authority that it once again was a resounding success and a well worthwhile event to have been in attendance at.

The Golf Club Secretaries versus Greenkeepers match will be contested at West Linton GC on Monday, April 14, so here's hoping they get a good day for it and the greenkeeper's prevail.

Troon Portland plays host to our Spring Outing on April 15. Tee times will be from 9:30am - be sure to get your form back to Derek quickly as I'm sure such a fine venue will attract an excellent turn out.

Derek Wilson's Irvine Bogside course will be the venue for this year's Scottish National Tournament on Monday, June 23. I'm sure the Ayrshire lads will be out in force to lay waste to the field and plunder the big prizes that day. I for one will be looking forward to playing one of the most challenging courses in the area.

The National Championship is to be played at East Sussex GC on October 13 and 14.

After a brief conversation with some of the West Section lads at Harrogate it was tentatively agreed to hold a rematch of the dramatic and thrilling football match we enjoyed a few year's ago in Glasgow.

Director of Football, Marshall Sloss, has taken on the responsibility of organising a fearless squad to give the West a torrid time of it. Anyone interested in playing should contact either Marshall or myself. It was only lack of fitness, subs and talent that let us down last time!

Our annual match against the County Down Greenkeeper's has been scheduled for Friday, September 19 at Duncan Gray's The Pines GC in Dumfries. Having lost the first two year's to the Irish lads I feel we jolly well need to roll our sleeves up next time and keep the Shield on Ayrshire soil. Give us a ring if you're up for it.

Ability to hold one's drink would be an asset to this event!

That's it for now. I'm off to watch the Boro destroy Cardiff as we march on to cup glory, just a pity we couldn't of got Man U or Chelsea in final!

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CENTRAL

Congratulations go to Albert Arnott, currently the Head Greenkeeper at

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Lochore GC, he will now take on the responsibility at the 18 hole Dora Golf Course. We would also like to wish Graham Taylor all the best on his move to sunny Spain from the equally tropical Leven, as he heads off to begin work on a new golf course project in Murcia. Graham, the guys from Leven said remember your friends.

The Walter Woods Trophy, now in its second year and organised by Elmwood College, was held recently at Scotsraig GC. The trophy was contested between teams from St Andrews University, Dundee University, Abertay University and Elmwood. The sharp and breezy conditions did not deter some good scoring and the day was rounded off by Walter Woods meeting with the players for dinner, and presenting the trophy to Dundee Uni who ran out the winners.

Gordon McKie, from the Old Course, recently spent a week at Guelph University near Toronto where he had been invited to give a series of presentations to various groups of students, as well as local business leaders, on how the Links at St Andrews are maintained along with some background on the history of golf on the Links. The visit has elevated him to a new status as the headlines in the regional newspaper the following week referred to "The Turf God Speaks".

On a personal note, by the time you have read this I shall (hopefully) have completed the Sports Relief mile, or three as I committed myself to. I would just like to say a massive thank you to all those in the industry who sponsored me. My aim was to raise a £100 but with a week still to go I was already well over £400 - no pressure then.

The website continues to get even busier, it's almost turning into a full time job for Graeme Taylor. Sign up and give us your views on what you would like your committee to organise for you and for the latest news: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Gordon Moir



EAST

The old saying that March comes in like a lamb and departs like a lion, is not true to form this year, with blizzard conditions experienced in early March and more on the way. Hopefully things can only get better!

The big golfing event this year is the Graham Wood Testimonial, which is being held at Dunbar GC on Friday, September 19 with all proceeds going to Graham and his family. The golf competition is, I understand, oversubscribed with 22 four-man teams entered, and a waiting list already formed. The day kicks off with a 10.30am shotgun start followed by a grand auction in the evening when an array of sporting memorabilia will be up for grabs. The main sponsors are local John Deere dealers, Thomas Sheriff & Co Ltd of Haddington, to whom the organising committee are extremely grateful.

The East Section are sending a team to play in Graham's testimonial. To help the committee raise the funds for this event it has been proposed

that a Fun Quiz Night be staged at the Railway Hotel in Haddington in late April/early May. Any member wishing to support this event can do so by entering a four-person team at a cost of £10 per team. Teams can comprise of family members, friends or trade. For further information or to enter a team, please contact our Social Convenor Stewart Crawford on: 01620 893103 or email: s.crawford@live.co.uk

Our congratulations this month go to Ross Prowse on his move from Dalmahoy, where he has worked for the last 10 years, to the Deputy's position at Muckhart GC near Dollar. I am sure my old friend Colin Russell will keep him on the straight and narrow and help further his knowledge of greenkeeping.

Until next month

Mike Dooner



NORTH

Just a quick introduction, my name is Ben Brookes and I have taken over from Robert Patterson as 'Magazine Man' for the North Section so please bear with me as this is my first newsletter. I can hear the moans now, what's a 'guffy' writing the notes for? It wasn't my plan, just address all complaints through one Hugh Mclatchie at Peterhead GC.

As I've taken on the Section news I would appreciate it if anyone within the Section could either email or phone me with the slightest bit of news whether it's anyone moving on to another club or what kind of week you've had just contact me, as one great big superstore said "Every Little Helps". My email address is: benbrookes@yahoo.co.uk and mobile: 07813889374.

One lad on the move is David Nicholson, he is taking on an Assistant Greenkeepers role at Murcar Links. I'm sure Brian and the lads there will make him feel at home. He is moving to us from Meldrum House.

The Section has at long last been able to purchase a laptop, I think Hughie has been doing a little bit of wheeling dealing and has come up with something suitable for the Section. You can just imagine him walking into shop with his flat cap and leather jacket and standing on a box to speak to the salesman. The laptop has been purchased, as discussed at the AGM, for the Secretary to have all the information available to him at Section Outings and to answer any queries that members have.

Speaking of Section outings, the Spring outing at Craibstone has been pushed back a week from the original date of Thursday, April 24 to Thursday, May 1. The forms for both of the Section annual outings will be posted out by Dale in the near future. The Autumn outing is on Thursday, September 18 at Kirriemuir. Keep the September form safe as there won't be anymore issued. For these outings we need as much support as possible. I know it's difficult for a lot of people to get time off but even if you just came to one to see how the day is run

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and to meet the committee and other greenkeepers it would be much appreciated, as without you the Section cannot survive. I sound like a stuck needle but we really do need your support.

The 200 Club cards should have been sent out by Robert Hardie by now, if you haven't received yours then let me know or you can let Robert know. If you need any more cards for any long lost relatives then just let us know and I'm sure it can be sorted out. Again this is an already well supported venture so long may this continue. I did go back to my former club, Newmachar and tried to sell a ticket to Patrick Wood but the deep pockets still remain!

As I'm writing this article the Scottish Conference in Dunfermline has just taken place and I understand that it went very well and was strongly supported. The North Section was well represented with lads from Newmachar, McDonald GC, Huntly and Fortrose and Rosemarkie – thank you for supporting the Section lads.

John Geddes, from McDonald GC, has asked me to pass on the news of the passing away of former member Gibby Wright who I'm sure a lot of the older members in the section will remember.

Thank you very much for your time lads and remember, if you have any information just let me know and I can pass it on to the rest of the Section.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links GC



WEST

Welcome to this month's report. I would like to welcome new member Andrew Orr, from East Kilbride GC. We hope to see you taking part in the golf outings and seminars planned for the year ahead.

We have a new member on the West Committee, Terry Smith from Helensburgh GC, I hope you will enjoy your time on the committee, it's good to see some younger members coming forward with new ideas.

I attended this year's show at Harrogate and I would like to congratulate head office, as the feedback from members was first class. It was good to see so many attending the show and the presence of the larger companies seemed to help. Many thanks to Peter Boyd for arranging the Scottish package which was first class value. I would like to pass on Barry McCulloch and Michael Maxton thanks - the patron award winners for 2007.

Loch Lomond was the venue for our recent seminar, the thrill of golf and the disturbance theory. Many thanks to the STRI for a first class presentation, also thanks to Ken Seims, from Loch Lomond GC, for

the use of their facilities and to David Carson, from Rigby Taylor, for sponsoring the days event. There were 35 greenkeepers in attendance, a good turn out for the time of year.

The Spring Outing is being held at East Renfrewshire GC on Thursday, April 24 - letters will be sent out early April. Please come along for a good days golf and meet up with some old friends.

The Scottish National Tournament is being held at Irvine Bogside GC on Monday, June 23, the course is a fine test of golf and will be in great condition as always.

Last year's annual night out was held at the Comedy Club in Glasgow, the numbers were low but the general conscientious was it was very enjoyable. This year we intend to go back with a greater amount of numbers. If you are interested please contact myself, Gavin Jarvis or any other committee member. Names are being taken at present so here's hoping for a good night out.

This year's fixture diary is now ready and should be with you very soon. For all information on outings and seminars check the Greenkeeper International website under the Education Forum.

I attended the recent superintendents show in Orlando, America, along with four other greenkeepers from the West Section, the trip was organised through the Fairways group Jacobsen, dealers throughout Scotland. We all had a fantastic time and memories of the trip will stay with us all for a long time.

I would like to thank David Rae for giving us the opportunity to attend the trip and to Richard Green for looking after us so well, also a big thank you to Ian Bridges from Ransomes Jacobsen for the hard work and effort from within the company to make it such a great success.

That's all for now, more news next month.

Fraser Ross
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NORTHERN REGION – NORTH EAST

Our first piece of news is that we now have sponsors lined up for the Spring and Autumn Competitions. The Spring will be through Turfcare Specialists Ltd, alias Terry Charlton, and Jacobsen, through Rickerbys of Hexham, are doing the Autumn Competition. As from this year the Fewsters Shield name will be changed to Ransomes Jacobsen, since Fewsters are no longer around these days. As one of the Spring majors needs replacing, perhaps we could use Turfcare as they have been good to us over the years with their many excellent prizes.

Next we have a bit of movement in the Section. The Section welcomes Roy White, formerly of Stocksfield GC, who's back in greenkeeping



and started work on March 1 at Slaley Hall - I believe a few of his comrades are wishing to join BIGGA, forms have been sent out via Graham Lauder, so come on lads get joining.

I recently heard that Stocksfield GC are having a new purpose built shed for all their machinery with work having started in the first week of March - another forward thinking club doing the necessary, it's a pity a few more golf clubs are not doing the same.

At the last count we have almost 100 members in the Section and could do with a lot more - I know of some golf clubs who only have one member and yet clubs like Whickham, Hexham etc have all their staff signed up as members of BIGGA. Well, that's all to report, any news is welcome.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTH WEST

At last I have something to write about. You should by now have received your fixture list for 2008. These have been sponsored by Sisis Turf Maintenance Machinery and we are all very grateful for their continued support.

If you have not received one, here are the dates: Spring Tournament, Heaton Moor GC, April 10; North West v North Wales, Ilangollen GC, June 10; Summer Tournament, Chorlton GC, June 19; Autumn Tournament, Davenport GC, September 4 - the stewards match is to be arranged; Presidents Cup and AGM, Wilmslow GC, December 4.

Here is the contact information for anyone who requires it. The Secretary, Bert Cross tel: 0151 7245412 or myself, Chris Sheehan: 0151 2894625 or: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk - for golf tournament details contact Billy Merritt at The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Mobile: 07985175825.

Chris Sheehan



NORTHERN

Just a very short and sweet report this month. I hope by now you have all received your fixture list for this year's events. If not, then do not worry here is the list in full. For those who have received a list there is one amendment. This year's Invitation Day, to be held at Shipley Beckfoot GC, will be held on Thursday, August 21 not Thursday 14 as advertised.

The fixture list in full is: Spring Tournament, April 30, Filey GC, 12.12 tee; Presidents Day, June 12, Cookridge GC, 12.30 tee; Northern V Sheffield, July 23, Otley GC; Invitation Day, August 21, Shipley Beckfoot GC, 1.30 tee; Autumn Tournament, October 1, The Alwoodley GC, 9.40 tee; Winter Golf, December 11, Halifax GC.

Please remember that your names need to be down and payment received at least one week before each event.

Adam Speight

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NORTH WALES

April, I hope, finds us rested and ready to face the ever so close season after a relaxing Easter break, do we really get a break on these so-called public holidays? Answers on a postcard please! I suppose that's what you get for working in the sport service industry.

I hope you enjoyed the seminar at Abergele GC and that if you're taking up the Safety Management System you'll get full benefit from it. A big thank you to all the speakers for giving their time and making an interesting day of it for us all - also an equally big thank you has to go to Abergele GC for making us all feel so welcome and allowing us to use their facilities.

It's all go now towards the Spring Tournament at Llanymynech GC sy10 8lb (yes helping these people with sat nav again!) on May 14. There is an amendment to be made on your entry form, it is classed as a medal but it will be scored on a stableford basis. Please get your entry forms back to Jeremy by May 5.

In local news, Carl Crocher, and his team at Caldycote GC, have been busy constructing three new greens and two new tees using green waste of compost and sand, then putting the original turf back on to provide the putting surface. Input was used from Tom Owen, who apparently did a lot of Formby's recent upgrade work as shaper and Alistair Begg as Agronomist/Architect. The greens are due to open in March/April; they have also completed the renovation of nine bunkers.

Our best wishes go to John Kerry of Royal St. David's who recently had pneumonia - get well soon.

Just remember though April showers may come your way it brings the trench foot that cripples in May.

All the best until next month

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Around the Green



MIDLAND REGION – MIDLAND

Why oh why do folks get married after cohabiting quite nicely for a number of decades? I recall my father spending an inordinate amount of money (so rare for him!) on a holiday at Port Merion so as he could pop the question on the hotel lawn. After being together for 20 years one would think such would be a simple formality. However, my stepmother said no, citing the costs of such. I am pleased that the above was not the fate of Ray Taylor of Gay Hill who has been graced with the hand of Claire after some 20 years of living in sin. Our happiest of congratulations to you both, and wishing you all the happiness in the world for the future. In answer to the afore question, "Because they want to".

What's this, more good news? Mike Hughes has become the new Course Manager at Ludlow GC. How does H&S work there when mowing fairways with race horses thundering across them? Also our Chairman, Ed Stant, has taken over at Trentham GC - I am sure Ed will not mind me thanking Penn GC on his behalf for eight years of rewarding and enjoyable employment there. Good luck to you both in your new posts.

Just another reminder, the Spring Tournament is to be held at Kidderminster GC on April 24, also the Scotts Doubles draw will be held there. If you haven't got your entries in to either/or both, then there is just enough time to enter if you ring Rhys on: 07775 581615. Please support our events, they are difficult to organise and are such great value for money, especially considering the reduced entry fee of a mere £20 for seasonal events, and £2.50 per person for the Scotts Doubles.

The Section would like to thank Osprey Irrigation Ltd. for sponsoring this month's calendar page. Did you spot the error in last month's notes? Summer 2007 was unbelievably wet, I did of course mean summer 2006. Osprey's informative website address is www.ospreyirrigation.com

Looking forward to seeing you at the spring event at Kidderminster.

Sean McDade

Training and Education

We enjoyed yet another successful days training workshop held at Gay Hill GC for the Irrigation Electrics Workshop. Tony Ware, Tonick Watering really blew our minds while trying to explain Faradays theory of electrics. Fortunately there were plenty of practical exercises for the delegates to do which brought us back down to earth, fortunately not with a bang. Mike Woolcock, Kiem Water was on hand to keep us all on track and show us how the repairs should be done. Tony even treated us to a few bomb making methods. I wasn't sure how best to use this advice but as the classroom also doubles as Gay Hill's committee room, a few ideas suddenly sprung to mind. Can't wait for the next meeting! I have already sent my apologies. We hope to run the event again so please get in touch if you would like to book your place.

Plans are underway for a Pesticides and Spraying Techniques Update, which will again be a practical refresher workshop aimed at keeping the operator up to date with the latest legislation, equipment and techniques. Anyone interested in booking a place on either event should contact me by email at paul@ghgc.org.uk

Paul Woodham
Education and Training Coordinator



EAST MIDLAND

Not much to report this month besides you should all have received entries for the Spring Tournament on Thursday, April 24 at Notts GC (Hollinwell), sponsored by Mansfield Sand. The tee is booked from 2pm until 3.30pm and is limited to 30 greenkeepers on a first come first served basis. The closing date for entries is Friday, April 18.

Congratulations go to Andy De Wet on his appointment as Course Manager at Birstall GC. We wish him all the best for the future.

Dan Rodgers
Secretary
07745227224



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all. Firstly I would like to begin by saying congratulations to Les Howkins on his appointment as Course Manager at Richmond GC. Les has been part of our Section for about eight years and during that time has served on the committee as secretary and vice-chairman. His input and dedication will be missed, however some of us may now stand a chance of winning a golf day! On behalf of the current committee I would like to wish him and his family all the best for the future.

Over 50 people attended our final seminar of the winter on Wednesday, February 27. It was held at Elsham GC and the topic of the day was 'The Disturbance Theory'. This was quite ironic after the earthquake the night before! The day was presented by the STRI with presentations from Henry Bechelet, Richard Windows and Megan Hood on various topics including, the fundamentals of the disturbance theory, how to prepare your course using minimal disturbance, the use of growth regulators and how Carnoustie was set up for the 2007 Open. If anyone has the chance to attend one of these seminars I would definitely recommend it. The day is informative to both course managers and



assistant greenkeepers and the enthusiasm shown by Henry is guaranteed to entertain.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank Henry, Richard and Megan for their excellent presentations, Elsham GC for their excellent hospitality and buffet and Ian Collett and Rigby Taylor for organising and sponsoring the day.

Our golf season fixtures have been finalised as below - April 16, Pottergate; May 20, Burghley Park; June 12, Cleethorpes; July 8, Gainsborough; August 19, Immingham VS Trade; September 24, Radcliffe-on-Trent VS Secretaries; October 2, Belton Park; December 10, Holme Hall.

Hopefully all golf days will continue to be as fun and relaxed, while highly competitive, as they have been for the last few years. All members are invited to attend, no matter what standard of golfer you are, a warm welcome will be extended to all.

Letters will be going out shortly about our first event, however if anyone should need any more information then contact Rob Welford.

A final reminder to everyone to visit and register on our website www.eastofenglandbigga.com

Many thanks

Steve Beverly
Immingham Golf Club



SOUTH EAST REGION – SURREY

Terrible news, the Gentleman's dinner at Walton Heath GC has been postponed due to some application forms not being sent back quickly enough. Now that I am no longer a member of a golf club I need to play in as many greenkeeper events as possible, so please, when you get the new date, don't let me down, return the application form immediately and let me have another days golf.

The following are our Section events for 2008: Texas Scramble, Laleham GC, April 10; Spring Tournament and National Qualifier, West Surrey GC, May 13; Surrey Greenkeepers v Wimbledon Common GC, July 18; McMillan Tankard at Sunningdale GC, September 11; Cresta Cup at Richmond GC, September 18; National Tournament at East Sussex National GC, October 13 and 14; England v Scotland at Hankley Common GC, November 5; Turkey Trot, Betchworth Park GC, December 11.

Fixtures to be confirmed are Match v Secretaries and Surrey v Essex v Sussex, October 21. Health and Safety Day at Foxhills (to be confirmed).

Now that Ron Christie is Secretary he has appealed to all of you to let me know of interesting news to put in ATG so that I don't fill it up with

details of my holidays every month. Well the bad news is that nobody has contacted me and the good news...my next holiday is booked in April and Studland Bay in Dorset is my destination. The nudist beach is a must for its fine views although the temperature is still a little cool for hanging around for long.

Brian Willmott



SOUTH WEST AND WALES REGION – SOUTH WEST

We had a fine welcome at Kingsdown GC for the first meeting of the 2008 season. Mark Ford and his staff had the course in brilliant early condition with dry fairways, and smooth fast greens. Mark fed his greens in late January with 4 0 10 winter fertiliser – in his own words “I don't overfeed, but this year the greens looked like they needed a little support after the frost and rain”. A very sensible approach, which has clearly paid dividends. The height of cut was 5mm, and Mark was looking forward to mini-coring and dressing in April. A good deal of work has been done on rebuilding bunkers since we were last here, and the course, which opened in 1890, has hardly looked better.

The competition was won, again, by Roger Neale aka “Ravishing Roger Rude” - for some reason (which escapes me) Roger has been compared with the American wrestler Rick Rude. So big respect next time you meet him. The full result: 1. Ravishing Roge, Taunton GC, 38 pts; 2. Jamie Acton, Worlebury GC, 37 pts; 3. Paul Healy, Worlebury GC, 36 pts.

Thanks very much to all at Kingsdown, especially Mark and the team, for a warm welcome and a great day.

The first of several Excavator Safety Training courses was run recently at Cirencester GC. Six of us, under the watchful eye of Joe Lewis - RGL Plant Ltd Trainer and Assessor - were put through our paces with mini-excavators digging and backfilling trenches, loading trailers, bulk handling, and tracking up and down steep slopes. I got stuck on a particularly severe downslope, and at one point was almost standing on the windscreen. As Joe said, “no need to panic - your bottom'll give way before the machine does”. After clambering gratefully out of the cab back on level ground - I knew exactly what he meant. A safety briefing followed in which we learnt all about how to balance the digger properly, the correct methodology of loading, site safety, trenching, safety of colleagues, and avoiding overhead and underground services (and what may happen if you don't!). Passing the course gives a licence, valid for five years, which qualifies the greenkeeper to operate up to a ten tonne machine. All this for the cost of only a couple of extra days digger-hire, and BIGGA CPD points as well!

Our grateful thanks to Cirencester GC for the use of their digger,

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and the facilities; and to BIGGA for helping with sponsorship from the Education Fund. Two additional one-day courses are scheduled at Woodlands GC and these will be sponsored jointly by Holt-JCB and BIGGA. It is hoped, if there is sufficient demand, to run further courses in the autumn. Do please register an interest by sending me an email.

The first Frank Newberry Management Masterclass will also have been held on March 12. Frank has come to the Section for the first time, and brings his own inimitable style combined with a deep understanding of the management situation within the golf course industry. This will hopefully be the first of several such days, and thanks to all those who have been forward thinking enough to enroll. Again, BIGGA CPD points apply, and thanks again to the BIGGA Education Fund and our Patronage Partners for sponsorship, enabling us to keep the course to a reasonable cost.

Another date for your diaries will be announced shortly – this will relate to an STRI information afternoon. The event is still on the drawing board, but will hopefully be held at Chippenham GC in mid-June, and will feature the local STRI advisors talking through dry patch, fertiliser regimes, disturbance theory, aeration and scarification etc, and how all these are relevant to our courses. It is intended that the day should start at 1pm, and run through until early evening. Watch this space for confirmation of dates, location, and itinerary etc.

The fixture list and invite for Clevedon will be tumbling through your letterbox soon. Please support your section by playing or attending as many events as possible. As I've recently discovered, just the arrangement of a couple of straightforward education events is in itself a pretty substantial amount of work. That pales to insignificance however compared to the efforts being put in to the Section by Nobby and your Committee – do please thank them by participating if at all possible. Have a good season.

Finally, could I welcome the following companies into the Patronage Scheme for this year. They are – Ecosol, Headand, and Ken White Signs. They join - Avoncrop Amenity, Vitax, Irritech, B.S. Mowers, Rigby Taylor, Countrywide, Symbio. Thank you one and all, your support is very much appreciated.

Paul Worster
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SOUTH COAST

First of all an apology, it would seem that ATG for February is lost! An explanation: at the turn of the New Year when the report was due, I was ill with the dreaded flu and it missed the deadline.

Our first outing for golf this year will be held at Alresford GC on May

1st. There will be a total of 27 holes played with 9 in the morning and the remaining 18 after lunch. The cost for the day is £22, which I'm sure you will agree is excellent value for 27 holes, and which includes a ploughman's lunch and an evening meal. Also a reminder that this event is the qualifier for the National Tournament, which this year will be held at the East Sussex National GC. It is also a very special event as we remember Colin White, who the tournament is played in memory of. Chalky White is greatly missed and when we remember him in conversation a smile always appears.

To book your place please send a cheque for £22 made payable to BIGGA South Coast to Kevan Glass at the following address: Apartment 1, Forge Side Court, Lepe Road, Langley, Southampton SO45 1SS. If you have any queries or need further information please contact Kevan on mobile 07859 053054 or email: glassy2003@hotmail.com.

The BIGGA South Coast Section educational seminar was held at Canford Magna GC on February 21. Once again it proved to be a successful and informative event. The attendance numbers were 80 plus which for a Section seminar is very encouraging. Such a day would not be possible without the input of sponsors and our presenters. A big thank you to our sponsors, Blade Amenity, Banks Amenity and Vitax Ltd. We are truly indebted for your input and support.

Our first presentation was from Ed McCabe, of Brockenhurst GC, on the subject of managing golf courses. Ed highlighted the importance of working with all parties within the golf club with good communication and strong policies for the long-term future of the golf course. Ady Archer followed with a talk entitled "Tomorrow's Course Manager" which emphasised sound advice and practical means for tomorrow's aspiring course managers. I have not got enough space in this report to fully praise Ed and Ady's papers for this seminar. Everybody agreed that they absolutely delivered an inspiring talk which stimulated an open discussion from the floor.

To follow was Simon Barnaby, from Syngenta, talking on the subject of "Plant Growth Regulators – latest research and development". What was so impressive with this presentation was Simon's excellent technical knowledge combined with superb practical and sensible advice for Sports Turf Managers. After a delicious lunch, we were very pleased to have our BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton, speak to us on the new BIGGA/GCMS Safety Management System, which by the way is available for members on the BIGGA website. Thank you John for informing the delegates about a very important subject.

To finish off the day Peter Hickling, the General Manager of High Post GC gave a speech on his role as General Manager which included the Clubs proud achievement of being awarded the Environment Agency's Water Efficiency Award 2007. Thank you Peter for your input, we hope you enjoyed sharing the day with us.

The Committee would like to praise the staff at Canford Magna GC for once again looking after us so well and making us feel very welcome. Thanks go to particularly to Alain Sainval and his catering staff. The last big thank you goes to Chris Bitten who organised the



event and the speakers. If an event goes smoothly as this one did I can guarantee you that means a lot of hard work has gone into the organisation of the day...Bravo Chris!

Chris and myself have already had a debrief meeting and are already working on next years seminar. Remember it's your Section so please let us know of any speakers, topics etc that you would like to be included in future seminars and also remember to let me know of any news in the Section. Please contact me on the number below.

Joe Crawley
01530 510060



DEVON AND CORNWALL

Our February meeting was held at Tavistock on a very pleasant day. Our sponsors for the day were Avoncrop and WBB, thank you to them for their continued support.

Thank you also to Head Greenkeeper, Gary Foster and his team for the use of the course and for putting up with us for the day! It was a pleasure to be out playing on such a well looked after course with fantastic far-reaching views.

We played a full handicap stableford competition with – 1. Tony Gooch, Torrington GC, 38pts; 2. Simon Clarke, St Mellion GC, 37pts; 3. Andy Parker, Downes Crediton GC, 35pts. We also had a Longest Drive competition won by our guest celebrity for the day, Tony Blackburn! Also Nearest the Pin on the par 3 15th, won by another famous person namely Richard Shapland. Congrats to all.

After the course walk was completed and the golfers had all safely returned, we all sat down to a wonderful lunch provided by the catering staff, a big thank you to them.

Afterwards our guest speaker for the day on the subject of Stress Management was Kate Porkess who gave us some excellent pointers and ideas to combat this problem which does unfortunately occur from time to time.

Just a word on the weather lovely and dry at the moment with some cold to help check things, hope we don't have a repeat of last year!

Well that's it for this month if anyone has any news or would like me to mention some forthcoming events you can email: greenwaysjrc@aol.com or phone 07764 224582.

Jerry Cole



SOUTH WALES

Hi everybody, it's time to shake off the cobwebs of winter and get those spreaders and sprayers out of storage, let's hope it will be a kind spring for us this year so we get a good start to the season. At the Grove we are just finishing the last of the winter programme and prepping everything in anticipation of some warmer weather.

The 2008 winter lectures, sponsored by Countrywide Turf and Amenity, continued on Wednesday, February 20 with Headlands Technical Director, Mark Hunt, giving a very interesting talk on "Health & Nutrition Strategies for Sports turf " we would like to thank Mark and Headland for their continued support.

That's it from me for this month, short and sweet because none of you guys have anything to say...wait, hot off the press some information from our Past Secretary Peter Lacey, he informs me Eric from Brecon GC has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Llandrindod Wells GC. Well done Eric all the best in your new post.

News and views to henry@henrystead.wanadoo.co.uk

Keep Smiling

Henry Stead

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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