



News from the Chief Executive

The suggestion by the Board that Full Membership should be opened up to Sports Turf Groundsmen seems to have sparked off a very mixed debate, but that should come as no surprise to anyone! There does however appear to be some confusion over the Association's motives for making such proposals and I will try to explain the rationale behind the move:

1. The discussions between BIGGA and the IOG during 2007 (ultimately terminated by the IOG) identified a great synergy between greenkeepers and groundsmen. Today greenkeepers can join the IOG as Full members why should BIGGA not afford the same privilege to suitably qualified groundsmen?

2. BIGGA will be putting a recruitment campaign into place to try to enrol further greenkeeper members but why should it not also market its services and the benefits of membership to groundsmen?

3. BIGGA is not setting out to 'wage war' on the IOG it is merely hoping to increase the available choice of professional representative bodies for sports turf employees. There are a great number of such employees who do not belong to either organisation - because they see no value in membership or because they are currently not entitled to join.

4. BIGGA has had a positive influence on the development and accreditation of the greenkeeping modules of sports turf qualifications through its active membership of the GTC. This has been achieved thanks to the close working relationship that exists between employer and employee, resulting in successful consultation with the awarding bodies. A process that is ongoing.

5. A great deal of the success in greenkeeper training is transferable directly into the rest of the sports turf industry. Why should BIGGA, and the GTC, not try to capitalise on this?

6. BIGGA, like so many other businesses, is suffering from the current downturn in the economic climate but it is not in financial trouble and it did make a surplus in the last financial year. If really necessary savings could be made but this would inevitably lead to a reduction in standards. A greater number of members would help improve financial stability, create better buying power, should attract better trade support and could help the Association win more official grant aid.

7. The sports turf industry is fragmented and BIGGA, working with the GTC framework, the awarding bodies and the training providers is in pole position to develop a National Centre for Sports Turf at Aldwark.

8. Courtesy golf is a privilege extended to BIGGA members so that they may improve their greenkeeping experience by playing other courses. It is not a right of membership, although I will be asking clubs to look more favourably at this through my connections within the GCMA and the Home Unions. The inclusion of groundsmen within BIGGA membership should not jeopardise these relationships and clubs will have the option to refuse groundsmen the same privilege. Membership cards will clearly distinguish greenkeepers from groundsmen by virtue of their job title and employer details.

My space is limited but I would like to clarify one point that seems to be misunderstood. BIGGA is governed by a Board that is made up of greenkeepers, with one exception (Mark Dobell - Guardian and the Finance Director of the R&A). The Board sets the policy that is administered by the Staff, headed up by myself, all of whom are accountable for their actions. I, in turn, am accountable to the Board. Contrary to popular belief the Association is therefore run by greenkeepers for the benefit of its members and not by the staff for their own ends!

The draft proposals for a change to the Constitution have been circulated for the purpose of consultation and will not be implemented without the overwhelming consent of members.



SCOTTISH REGION - CENTRAL

The Central Section held their AGM at Elmwood on October 27, when Gordon McKie, of St Andrews Links, was elected as Chairman and Derek Robson, of the Dukes Course, was elected Vice Chairman. Also elected to the Committee were Donald Gardner, of Scoonie GC, and Bob Meikle, of Craig Golfing Society. Andy Mellon remains as Secretary/Treasurer. Andy O'Hara has stood down as immediate Past Chairman and been re-elected to the Committee. Graeme Taylor and Alan Sharp, who has left the area, have both stood down from the Committee and we thank them for their help over the years, although Graeme will continue to administer the website on our behalf.

Those present heard that Kenny Mitchell, of St Andrews Links, and Charlie MacDonald, of Crieff, were the recipients of the Patrons Award for the Section and that the Spring Outing in 2009 will be held at Scotsraig GC. The question was asked "How much golf will Derek Scott be able to play now he no longer has the distraction of being Chairman?" Answers on a postcard to...

Prior to the AGM, Martin Heywood, of Quadrop, gave an informative presentation on the benefits of good quality irrigation water and the problems that can be encountered by using unsuitable water. The Quadrop system has been used in many areas other than golf course irrigation and is a very simple, safe and effective way of reducing bi carbonates, reducing ph and reducing surface tension among other benefits. Both Kingsbarns Golf Links and The Castle Course, along with Dunbar and Longniddry have been using the system for the past couple of seasons with great results.

The website: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk has been quiet over the summer with everyone being busy, so let's try and pick it up again. We have been trying to drip feed information onto it on a regular basis to try and keep it fresh. It's unfortunate that a lot of this is about St Andrews Links but unless others supply us with the info, there's not a lot we can do so if you have something you think will be of interest to others then pop it in an email to Andy Mellon, Gordon McKie or myself.

A number of members from Clubs in the North East Fife area attended a three-day workshop over consecutive Fridays on Risk Assessment training. An important aspect of health and safety procedure, the course conducted by Pitchblue International, took those present through practical examples of identifying hazards and writing up risk assessments as well as covering current health and safety regulations. With a grant from the BIGGA Education fund, the course cost £125 per person and if there was enough interest from others in the Section then I am sure we could stage another one in a more central area in February. Again, please contact your committee to let us know.

This course might be quite appropriate because through October we have had visits from the Environmental Health Officers for NE Fife to carry out very comprehensive inspections of our operations and procedures at all three greenkeeping facilities at St Andrews Links. This is the beginning of them working their way through all golf clubs in the area so be aware.

On behalf of everyone on the Committee, have a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and may all your problems be birdies.

Gordon Moir



EAST

I write this report in early November with no let up to the wet and windy weather and with our first snowfall already in late October; we could be faced with a long winter ahead.

The Section AGM was held on Thursday, October 30, at Dundas Park, prior to which a lecture on the sustainable approach to golf course management was given by Gary Smith of Scott's. Our thanks go to Gary for his time, and for sharing with us some of his knowledge and expertise. During the AGM Chairman, Stewart Ferguson, accepted the resignation of Secretary, Stevie Dixon, and committee member Peter Ormiston. The Section owes a debt of gratitude to both Stevie and Peter for their efforts over the years. The new committee is as follows: Chairman - Stewart Crawford, Vice Chairman - Jimmy Neilson, Secretary - Stewart Ferguson, Education Officer - Tom Murray, Match Secretary - Robbie Murdoch.

The new committee are in the process of organising a calendar of events, the first of which is a site visit to Kingsfield Golf Centre near Linlithgow on December 9. After a seven year absence, Thorntrees Amenity returned to Scotsturf. We arrived with few expectations, regarding it as flag waving exercise. While it would be wrong to say our industry is not suffering from the credit crunch, I felt most people at the show including stallholders and visitors were remarkably upbeat. The exhibitors I spoke to all reported a steady flow of interest during the two day show.

On a personal note, rumours circulating the Lothians of my imminent retirement are wide of the mark, unfortunately I have a few years to go before that day arrives!

Finally, on behalf of the committee, I would to wish you all the compliments of the season.

Until next month
Mike Dooner



NORTH

I start this month's newsletter by wishing all our members and their families a very Merry Christmas. It's that time of year when we have the traditional Christmas night out. From my experience I always tend to write the following day off. I'm sure there are a few of you out there that can relate to that. Drop me a line and let me know what kind of night you have, if you have one at all. Not every employer is as generous as the next though.

The weather has taken a turn for the worse. The hard frosts and the sprinklings of snow have already started. The winter greens will have been cut ready for the frosty mornings, tees moved forward etc. Hopefully all your winter programmes will be in full swing too.

The AGM that was arranged for October 29, at Meldrum House Golf Club, was cancelled due to a snow blizzard. A new date has been arranged for November 20 but the results of the day's golf will be printed in the next edition.

The local area of Aberdeenshire has just learned that Trump International have been given the go ahead. Personally I think the area will benefit, what

with other golf ventures being given the go ahead recently. Paul Lawrie has been given the green light for his project as has Jack Nicklaus for his development at the Ury Estate, near Stonehaven. The proposed re development of Hazelhead will also add to what is already a strong industry in The North of Scotland, long may it continue! The guys that must be panicking are the Head Greenkeepers, wondering whether or not their staff will be applying for the positions that will become available at these venues. Let me know what you think?

One thing I did miss out from last month's newsletter was the results of the 200 Club draw from Kirriemuir. The results are as follows: Neil Sadler £30; D Chisholm £30; Moira Beaton £30, and S Davidson £100.

It was made even better with the fact that Neil Sadler had just bought that ticket. Well done Neil. You can't win it if you haven't got a ticket.

You may have noticed that I have been waffling a wee bit this month. This is due to the lack of news in the area. Let me know if you think of anything I could include in the next edition else I could be blethering on again, sorry.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links
07813889374



WEST

Welcome to this month's report, wet weather and leaves falling everywhere – it's great autumn has arrived.

This year's AGM was held at Renfrew Golf Club with approximately 40 in attendance. Gary Smith, Technical Representative from the Scott's company, carried out a first class Seminar on trends on nutrient programmes and updates on Primo Max. I would like to thank Gary as the talks were first class with everyone passing on good comments, also for sponsoring the day's events, as lunch was laid on with 9 holes of golf.

I would like to thank the Captain and committee for allowing us use of the clubhouse and courtesy of the course.

There were several issues discussed on the day that will be brought up at our next committee meeting.

Douglas Macintosh has finished his term in office as Chairman. Well done to Dougie on the work he has carried out over the past two years. Our new Chairman is Brain Hillan, from Drumpelie Golf Club. Gavin Jarvis is staying on as Secretary and I will be staying on as Education Convenor.

I would like to thank all committee members for their hard work throughout the 2008 season, as a lot of work goes unnoticed.

There will be two or three new members coming on to help and things should be in shape for early next year.

Monday, November 3, was the date for our annual team match against the stewards it was a cold and frosty morning at Douglas Park Golf Club, a fierce match was fought with the score set at 3.5 each, the stewards retained the trophy as they won the previous year, I would like to congratulate my team and hopefully next year with a little more fine tuning we will retain the cup.

Many thanks to Drew McKechnie and his staff for the good condition of the course this late on in the season and to the committee for allowing us courtesy of the Course.

Like many others I attended Scotsturf and was very disappointed as the show seemed very quiet, this was to be the general opinion across the



Around the Green

body of the hall. I don't know what the way forward is but it must be possible to spruce it up a bit.

A couple of notes for the diary: Harrogate 2009 - the Scottish package will be from Monday 19 to Thursday 22 January, please get in contact with Peter Boyd for more details: 01416163440.

The Scottish Conference will be held at Dunfermline College during March, dates will be given in next month's report.

Hopefully the snow is just round the corner; see you next month.

Fraser Ross
07970366355
karen.ross@tesco.net



NORTHERN REGION - NORTH EAST

On October 8 we played our annual Autumn Competition at Burgham Park - this being the first time that we have played there since the opening in the mid-90s. What a pleasure to play there. "Outstanding" was the verdict by everyone who turned up on the day, huge greens, generous fairways, hardly any rough to talk about not that you need any as the trees planted all those years ago came into their own, should you hit a stray shot and it had to be stray. Off the white markers the course measured 6,800yds, you knew then that the scores were going to be high and we were not disappointed, it should be pointed out that there were blue markers further behind on most tees thank goodness we didn't play off them.

Congratulations to Head Greenkeeper, Eddy Crozier, and his small team on the remarkable condition of their course - considering all the rain we have had in recent weeks, all the greenkeepers remarked on the greens as the best they had played on this year and not forgetting the catering staff for, not only a great meal but the first class service, no doubt in our minds a very friendly golf club. I hope it's not too long before we return there in the near future.

Many thanks to the sponsors on the day: Ransomes Jacobsen, Turf Spec Ltd, Rigby Taylor, Tacit, Shorts, and Greenlay, many thanks to you all once again.

The leading scores are as follows: Best Gross (salver) J. Gibson, Northumberland GC, 78pts; Best Nett (Ransomes Cup) J. S. Richardson, Hexham GC, 75pts; Best Nett (Greenlay Cup) S. R. Pope, Tyneside GC, 79pts; Best Nett (Fewsters Shield) M. Hastry, Heworth GC, 79pts; K. Shotton, Alnmouth Village GC, 79pts; M. McKenna, Hexham GC, 79pts.

The Fewsters Shield from next year will be changed to the Ransomes Jacobsen Shield.

Well it's that time of the year when greenkeepers are trying to better their education in greenkeeping by attending various courses. One such member is Michael McKenna, of Hexham Golf Club, who has started working on a Foundation Degree in Sportsturf Management online through Myerscough College for the next three years.

And finally no doubt Terry Charlton will be putting on a coach to take people down to Harrogate Weel, in January - so thanks again Terry and congratulations to Terry's sidekick, Alan Morton, on his recent marriage. Hope you enjoyed your little ride on a pulley from the Baltic - I think everyone on the telly managed not to do a bad bit of advertising with those sweaters.

Jimmy Richardson



SHEFFIELD

Hello everyone. As we come to the end of another year, it is time again for us all to reflect on the year that has passed. It has once again been a difficult year for us greenkeepers to maintain the standards we strive for. Though I am sure that we have once again achieved our goals. Hopefully 2009 will prove to be a better year for us all.

Looking forward to the New Year as a Section, we will have a lecture for the early part of the year and an event for the spring. We will make sure these dates are confirmed early in the year so members can be informed ASAP.

We are also looking to get a website up and running next year as we believe it will be a valuable tool for us to move the Section forward. If anyone has any queries about this or any suggestions about the information posted on the website then please feel free to contact me.

We have once again had a good year as a Section and anyone who has attended any of our events will agree that they are fantastic days. Hopefully we will see a few fresh new faces in 2009.

I hope all who attended the Christmas competition at Worksop GC had a fantastic day and thank you for your support. I would also like to thank all our sponsors for their continued support over the past year.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and see you all in 2009.

James Stevens
Section Secretary
jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com



NORTH WALES

December already - where has the year gone? 2009 is on our doorstep with new challenges and opportunities, who knows, the possibilities could be endless!

The autumn tournament took place on October 8, at Upton Golf Club, and with the sun shining down on the beautifully set course it was a great day for golf, and the excellent catering and warm hospitality of the clubhouse the day was one to remember.

We need to send our thanks to Justin Cheung and staff and also the clubhouse staff for the hard work put in for our enjoyment.

Results are as follows: 1. Ian Murphy, Leasowe GC, 43pts; 2. Dave Hird, Leasowe GC, 36pts; 3. Haydon Jones, Chirk Golf Club, 35pts; 4. Charlie Land, St Deiniol Golf Club, 35pts.

The results and report on the Christmas tournament will be in next month's column.

The Section will run a coach to Harrogate next month with the usual pick-up points anyone needing further information or to book seats please get in touch with Jeremy Hughes.

The Section passes on its best wishes for a speedy recovery to Gary Barnfield, of Oswestry Golf Club, who was seriously injured earlier this



year, also we would like to wish Don Pemberton good luck as he has left greenkeeping to try work pastures anew.

All that is left now is for me to wish you all a merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Pete Maybury
petemayb66@aol.com

Johnny Evans
Johnny. Evans @tesco.net



MIDLAND REGION - EAST MIDLAND

Hi folks. I'd like to start with an apology for the lack of notes from the Section over the past couple of months. A restructuring of the committee unfortunately caused one or two things to be overlooked. I'll try to briefly outline what has been going on in the Section during the late summer.

During September, with the kind help from Lely/Toro and Andy Humble, a visit to Wembley Stadium was undertaken by 50 greenkeepers from the Section. All who attended had a brilliant day and our thanks go out to Andy Humble for sponsoring the trip.

The annual Midlands vs East Midlands match, sponsored by Rigby Taylor, took place on October 10, at Keddlestone Park. Another resounding victory 10 - 5 to the East Midlands was the result at the end of an excellent day. Well done to Dave Leatherland and his team for the condition of the course. The qualifying criteria to be considered for selection next year is that players must play in both the Spring and Summer tournaments to be given the first option on playing. Selection will then work downwards from there.

On October 31 the AGM Tournament was held at Staverton Park GC. Numbers for the event were on the disappointing side with only six non committee or trade members attending, however, everyone that played had an excellent time and the course was in superb condition - especially considering it was covered in snow the day before. Congratulations go to Ken Barber and his team for their hard work on the course. The winning team on the day was Glyn Buckby, Andrew de Wet and Simon Banks with a nett score of 62.9. Many thanks go to Stewart Jeffs and Vitax Ltd for their sponsorship of the event.

Nick Miles, Asa English and Andrew de Wet represented the East Midlands Section in the second Inter Regional tournament on November 6 at Northants County GC. An excellent day was had during tough conditions and the team scored a very credible score of 218 to win by 4 shots - here's to a successful defence next year.

Our Christmas Tournament will be played on Thursday, December 11, at Glen Gorse GC - again sponsored by Rigby Taylor. The cost for the day will be £15 for greenkeepers and £25 for trade and associate, including a three-course meal. If any of you are reading this before the day and haven't signed up then please get in touch on the number below for a tee time.

There were a couple of changes in committee positions at the AGM. Tim Allard stood down as Chairman and was replaced by Nick Miles. Thanks Tim for all you have done for the committee over the years. Nigel Colley took over as Vice Chairman and Andrew de Wet officially took over the Secretary and Treasurer's role after doing it on a temporary basis for the previous three months.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our new Chairman Nick Miles on being selected to be part of the Bernhard's delegation to the GCSAA show in New Orleans in January 2009. I'm sure you'll have an excellent time and we look forward to the presentation at one of next year's events!

If anyone wants to get in contact regarding any news, ideas for golf days, education or anything else to do with the section then please contact me by:

email: biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com
or on: 07730 713895.

Andy de Wet



MIDLANDS

The Scotts Doubles Final was contested between Steve Harvey and partner Neil Smith of Wharton Park and Terry Cheese and partner Phil Nixon of Walsall GC and Penn GC respectively. The final took place on the famous West Course at Wentworth on Thursday, October 23. After a splendid start, including four birdies in the first seven holes, the pairing from Wharton Park found themselves three up at the turn. After some scintillating golf, and some missed short putts, the match was over at the 16th, with Steve and Neil winning 3&2, and taking the trophy for the first time. All finalists will have their handicaps reduced for next year's Doubles Competition! Thanks as always to Chris Kennedy and the Wentworth Club for hosting our flagship event of the year, and of course to The Scotts Company and Nia Frost for their continued sponsorship of the event.

The Committee Cup was held at The Belfry this year, around the maturing PGA course on Tuesday, October 14. After checking the rules, the winner was Richard Beacham from Wrekin GC on 33pts from Ed Stant on a countback that went to the last six holes of the front nine! Thanks to Kenny McKay and The Belfry for allowing us use of the course, which we all thought was in great condition and much enjoyed.

Both trophies will be presented at the Christmas Tournament at South Staffs Golf Club on Wednesday, December 3.

As can be seen on this month's calendar page, our Section is perhaps one of the leaders in providing invaluable on-the-job education courses that not only improve ones skills in a practical manner but also provides the tools to prevent future health and safety problems - that I'm sure we are all so aware of from both a moral and legal sense. Our thanks to Gay Hill Golf Club and Paul Woodham in particular for supporting/running many of these invaluable events. Please see our website for all future upcoming events: www.biggamidlandsection.com This month's calendar page is kindly sponsored by T.H.White. For your Ransomes/Jacobsen needs please email: www.grassredditch@thwhite.co.uk

Now, last month I rather prematurely wished you all a Merry Christmas. I have not been premature since being born some two months early, 41 years ago at a weight of 2lb2oz, I've caught Roach heaver. However, I now weigh almost as much as my last Salmon of 14lb2oz, for you purest fly fishers out there, on the dry, 9ft #4 and then released to spawn. Christmas came early for me, and I look forward to its kinder.

Once again, wishing all a Very Merry Christmas.

Sean McDade



Around the Green



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all. It's the beginning of November as I write this, it has spent the last two days pouring with rain and the golf course is covered in puddles. Couple that with the first frost in October that I have ever known, and a covering of hail one morning, and you could say it has been an interesting start to the winter. The last two winters have remained warm and dry until at least Christmas so we will see what winter 2008/9 has in store for us all.

Our Christmas Golf Day is being held at Holme Hall Golf Club, in Scunthorpe, on Monday, December 8. Tee off is at 10:30am however, arrive early for coffee and bacon buns. Our Christmas "bring and win" draw will also take place, so bring along a wrapped present of about £10 in value, put it on the table and then see what you go home with!

I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year, eat and drink plenty and generally have a good time. Currently at our house we have a room stacked full of toys ready to be wrapped and then unwrapped by our son, Archie, on his first Christmas Day. I am sure the wrapping paper will prove more attractive than the toys inside!

All the best

Steve Beverly
Immingham Golf Club
Steveimmingham@aol.com
www.eastofenglandbigga.com



BERKS/BUCKS & OXON

It is with great sadness that I have to report the tragic loss of Peter Carter who passed away after suffering a stroke and deteriorated within a few days from the onset of a blocked artery.

Since leaving school Peter worked in all aspects of the grass care industry and I first met him when he started his greenkeeping career at Southfield GC, as a young and enthusiastic member of the team.

Peter worked his way up the ladder and attained the position as Head Greenkeeper at Southfield GC, then with a new hat found a passion for machinery before moving onto sales for the Big Mower Co covering the Buckinghamshire area.

Peter then joined and represented T.H.White covering the Berkshire and North Hampshire area and had just started to forge a successful sales career when he was tragically struck down.

For those of you that met Peter, you will remember him as the "Big Fella" who was always "Full of Beans". Peter was a real character, with total commitment and enthusiasm that always filled the room with laughter and brought a huge smile to all who knew him.

Peter passed away at the age of 28 on November 3 and leaves his wife,

Cass, and daughter, Taylor, he will be sorely missed and fondly remembered by all who had the pleasure of his company and worked alongside him.

Peter Carter R.I.P.

The BB&O welcomes Lawrence McCrory, from Mentmore Golf Club, who has started his first step up the ladder as Head Greenkeeper, at Bicester Golf Club, also joining him as "The Best Man for the Job" is Ian Robins who after 10 years at Ellesborough Golf Club. will take the challenging position as Deputy Head Greenkeeper. Wishing you both a great start on a road that will lead to fulfilling your ambitions within your greenkeeping careers.

We have had good turnouts at all our Section events which were well supported and long may it continue into 2009, Thank you to all the trade suppliers who endorsed the golf days throughout the year which included Gem, Browns, T.H.White, Turner Groundcare, Burdens, Rigby Taylor, Tacit, Greentech, Avoncrop, Headland, Sheriff, Banks and E.T.T., hope I have not left anyone out.

Harrogate Week will soon be upon us, I hope many of you are able to take the time to visit the delights of Yorkshire, until then I look forward to seeing you all in the new year, in the meantime if you have any news or views you might think useful to the Section please e mail me at mark.day@tacitgolf.com

Wishing you all a Great Xmas and New Year.

Mark Day



MID-ANGLIA

Well there you go, another year has nearly gone and as you read this, Christmas is just around the corner. As I write this, way back at the end of October, there have already been several quite hard frosts and it makes me wonder if we are due for a really cold winter. The thought of which would not be quite so bad if a really decent summer were to follow.

The other climate that is very topical at the moment is the financial one. It remains to be seen how far widespread the effects will be. Unemployment and house repossessions are the real worry and it seems a little unfair how the lending institutions can go cap in hand to the Government to get bailed out and then pull the plug so quickly on people who are struggling to pay their mortgage. Some good things may be coming out of the situation, already fuel and food prices are cheaper and mortgage rates look to be heading lower. If we all stick together and plead poverty maybe we can fool the government and retail industry to keep taxes and prices low.

Rather than give the banks, who can't lend it responsibly, bail out money wouldn't it have been better to pay all of our mortgages off. Thereby cutting out the incompetent bankers and enabling us all to have much more disposable cash to spend and prop up the economy. It sounds good to me, I wonder if it was viable. If you see any desperate investment bankers outside the window of a high-rise building, don't forget to shout "JUMP!" Check out <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=UC31Oudc5Bg> for Bremner, Bird and Fortunes very prophetic sketch from the nineties. Anyway, rant over and seriously, let's all hope that when it comes round to renewing golf club memberships the economy is looking in better shape.

Now back to golf and the Autumn Tournament at Mentmore Golf Club. Well done to Danny James and his team for producing an excellent course that was enjoyed by the 30 strong field. Also, sincere thanks to Mentmore



Golf Club for hosting the day and making us feel so welcome. Dave Murphy and Rob Catlin, of Pareto Golf, were the generous sponsors of the day and big thanks to you both.

Results: 1. Myles Wood, Berkhamsted GC, 39pts; Nearest the pin – Myles Wood; 2. Paul Crouch, St Neots GC, 37pts; 3. Dan Hodkin (on countback), Knebworth GC, 37pts. Longest Drive - Jonathon Smith, South Beds GC. (Tom, you're obviously not working him hard enough beforehand.) Finally, thanks again to all the trade members for supporting the day.

Please don't forget the First Aid courses and Spraying courses that are being organised throughout the winter months. There are still some places available for the courses mentioned in this article last month. If you are interested in attending please contact Gerald Bruce at Berkhamsted Golf Club for further details. Finally, any contributions to this article would be most welcome, rants included! Have a Merry Christmas and I will write to you again in the New Year.

Craig Spooner
craig.spooner@advanta-seeds.co.uk



SOUTH EAST REGION - SURREY

Thursday, November 6. Did you know that Napoleon Bonaparte suffered from severe hemorrhoids and that this may have contributed in his defeat at Trafalgar? I didn't until my last holiday (September) on the island of Elba. Elba, situated off the North Western coast of Italy, was warm, hilly, has a mountain reached by a unique cable system and was the 10 month exile home of poor old Bony after his defeat. Did you know that the way to kill an octopus is to bite it on the head? I didn't until I went on a guided walk with Elba's answer to Ray Mears. Fortunately he didn't cook it for us on the beach but took it home for his supper, as he believed that as he caught it why make us suffer. I would confirm that visiting Elba is not a cure for sufferers of the farmer Giles but definitely as a cure for those contemplating the murder of an octopus.

While I was away the now annual golf contest between Surrey, Sussex and Essex was fought on the slopes of the South Downs at the Dyke GC. The Surrey Captain, Ronald Augustus Christie, praised the quality of the course, manicured to a fine degree by David Ansell and reported that after a hard battle against the opposition and the elements, Sussex erupted as winners followed by Surrey and last year's winners Essex demoted to third place.

Twelve good Englishmen traveled, on November 5, to Hankley Common GC, to meet a Scottish team bent on revenge as England had retained the cup after four years of the contest finishing in a draw. This year, however, would put a stop to this unsatisfactory and inconclusive end to the match, for if it was a draw again, the last match would continue in an exciting play off. Exciting it would have been had England not spoil the fun by beating Scotland four games to two.

In his victory speech, after an excellent lunch, Tony Bremer reminded all present that Scotland had still not won the trophy this century while John Ross, Captain of the runners up, reminded all present that it was Roger Tydeman's birthday on November 18 and that if anyone could guess Roger's age, Roger would buy them all a drink at the Turkey trot on December 11. He will be two score years and 10 but don't tell him I told you.

Lewis Hamilton, Formula 1 champion, had better beware for if he ever

races against Surrey Section's world championship racing driver he may come off second best. Yes, Steve Basher Bush, Mechanic at St Georges Hill GC, is the 2008 world lawn mower racing champion (group 2) and his 24" Atco lawn mower with trailer seat can reach speeds in excess of quite fast. The championships venue at Reservoir Dip, Billingshurst may not attract the same crowds and excitement of the Formula 1 Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos, but for Steve and his family the thrills and the glory were just as good. For a photo of our hero give me a stamped address envelope with a tenner inside, marked Basher.

A sad ending to this month's report and I am sure you will all join with me in sending our condolences to Nigel Weller, North Downs GC, and his family for his wife passed away in October after a long illness.

Brian Willmott



KENT

Hi guys. Firstly, I hope all of you who attended the recent Turkey Trot at Birchwood Park thoroughly enjoyed yourselves. I shall do a full results listing in next months magazine in case any of you can't remember who won! As was said at the AGM, another five events are scheduled for 2009 and we are always pleased to welcome new faces as well as our hardcore regulars to any of the dates.

Our website has been vastly improved recently thanks to the dedication of Danny Stunt, of Chislehurst Golf Club. We really want to make this a fun place to visit as well as getting your usual info from regarding Kent Section news so please send in some contributions from your clubs. We will all be having staff parties over the next month so get some pictures of the greenstaff having fun and send them to Dan at the address below.

A couple of thank you'd to finish on. Firstly, to my guys at Birchwood for another great year on the course. It's nice to look forward to going to work. Secondly, to everyone who has attended our golf days this year, it has been an absolute pleasure organising golf days for such a great bunch of people. And, last but by no means least, to our sponsors who have made everything we do on the Kent Section possible. We proudly display their individual logos on our website in recognition of what they provide us.

Sorry for the short report but off Christmas shopping now (via the pub!).

Merry Christmas one and all. Best of British
Rob Holland
kentgreenkeepers.co.uk



EAST ANGLIAN

The East Anglians drifted inland to Cambridge in October to visit an old friend. Gog Magog Golf Club was the venue and Lyndon was the 'old' friend. The course was marvelous thanks to Kieran Daly and his team. One of his



Around the Green

team, Chris to be precise, five putted the 14th (well if he can do it). He was rewarded with the loo seat for his efforts. Lyndon had not changed much, must be 12 years since we were there last, and he's still Welsh.

The antics of the day were performed by the few and Mr John Bruce-Ball, the club captain, presented the spoils. They are as follows:

0 - 9 Handicap: 1. Mark Henderson, 41pts; 2. Alan Elliot (Arthur), 38pts; 3. Ben Wallis, 36pts. 10 - 18 Handicap: 1. John Coote, 45pts (winner of the Toro Trophy and Shield); 2. Glen Rayfield, 35pts; 3. David Farmer, 34pts. 19 - 28 Handicap - Real Golfers: 1. Adrian Goode, 34pts; 2. Pat Swinn, 34pts; 3. Roy Britton, 31pts. G & T's: 1. Brian Lyndores, 42pts; 2. Sean Payne, 39pts, 3. Bob Tawell, 39pts. Longest drive was won by John Coote. Nearest the pin was Gordon Hogg. The loo seat was mentioned earlier (five putts!) The Greenkeeper/Captain Shield was won by Mike Virley and his Captain, Sean Payne, with 75 pts.

Well done everyone. One day I'll write my own name in dispatches - probably for the loo seat (again).

The main sponsors of the day were Lely UK Toro. Our other trusty trade members were in support as usual. They were Symbio, Headland, Vitax, Aitkens, SISIS, Earnest Doe's, Bartram Mowers, Monro Sport, Consultant Clarkson, Rigby Taylor, Tacit, Ben Burgess, Baileys and Tomlinson Ground Care.

Thanks again to Gog Magog Golf Club for a super day. The meal and catering staff were also on the ball and we hope it's not 12 years 'til next time. Lyndon will still be Welsh, just a bit older.

Mick Lathrope



ESSEX

Unfortunately due to the time of the year there is not much to report this month.

Paul O'Kane, our education officer, has been working on a morning seminar we hope to have in mid to late February, we have not yet finalised a venue or the speakers, but we will be posting the information on the website and in the next issue of the magazine, as soon as we have a more clear indication of who and where. It is proposed that we will have three good speakers and include a brunch. Please watch out for more information.

Last Friday, November 7, I was lucky enough to be invited by Dennis Smith to attend the Havering "in Bloom" awards, in Romford, at which Upminster Golf Club received an award for a Garden on section of their course. (See the news pages of this magazine for a full write up.)

Fourball Matchplay Final. On a still November morning the final of the Essex Section Matchplay Final was played at Thorndon Park Golf Club. Between Mark Stopps/Mark Keysell and Antony Kirwan/Don Clark.

The golf over the front nine was as expected of a final, not many holes exchanged and at the end of the ninth hole the match was all square.

As soon as they reached the back nine the game sparked to life with Stopps/Keysell winning the tenth, followed by a great birdie 2 by Keysell at the short 12th hole, halved at 13 with birdies from Keysell and Kirwan, Kirwan took 14, but Keysell made another birdie at 15, to take the match 2 up in their favour. The 16th was halved and a birdie by Clark took the match down the 18th, but a solid par at the last by Stopps claimed the match by 1 hole.

Congratulations go to Mark Stopps and mark Keysell who claimed this year's title.

A massive thanks to Rob George and his team, at Thorndon and for the clubs hospitality.

Our Christmas Golf Day and AGM at The Essex Golf Club, to be held on December 4, will be a thing of the past when you read this. I will include the results in the next magazine early in the New Year.

We are just coming up to the end of our first year of joint sponsorship of the Section and the committee would like to thank all of our sponsors for there support over the past year:

Advanta, Avoncrop Amenity Products, Baileys, Banks Amenity Products, Blade Amenity, CMW Equipment Company Ltd, Collier Turf Care, Ernest Doe & Sons, GM Amenity, Grassform, Headland, Liquitex, Prime Irrigation Ltd, Rainbird, Ransomes Jacobsen, Rigby Taylor, Scotts, Syngenta, P, Tuckwell Ltd, Vitax, Writtle College.

To all of you, both members and sponsors, we wish you a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year and all of us on the committee hope to see you for our seminar in February and then for the five golf days that follow through the year.

Details and links to all our sponsors can be found on the website along with links to other interesting sites with up to date information and other things.

Arnold Phipps-Jones
essexbigga@talktalk.net
01206-852.353/07764-862.337

www.essexbigga.co.uk



SOUTH WEST & WALES REGION - SOUTH WEST

Seasonal Greetings to everyone - exactly where did this year go? Still - looking on the bright side, at least Christmas will soon be over. Please try to support the Section Christmas Meeting at Weston Super Mare on December 18. Golf on one of the best links courses around, bacon rolls before golf, a full Christmas meal after, and one of Nobby's raffles - what more could we ask for? Invites are largely by email - so please watch your inbox and ask your Secretary as these will go to the clubs, and watch the BIGGA Bulletin Boards (The Open Forum) for details. Please try to get used to this because this is the way that invites will go out in the future.

Thanks to everyone who supported the "Bunker Masterclass" at Burnham & Berrow back in October. This was actually requested by a Section member who wanted some help with his bunkers. It was very gratifying, after all the organisation to see some 65 people in the audience. Well done.

For those who missed it, the afternoon was opened by Chris Wood, fresh from 8th place in the (Madrid?) Open giving us a clear picture of how the Pros regard bunkers, and the enormous variations from area to area in Europe and the contrast with the USA. He also shared with us his Open Championship experience from Royal Birkdale and not surprisingly, as it turns out, that walk up the 72nd with Ian Poulter was not for those of a nervous disposition.

Mick Higgins, of Rufford Sibelco, gave valuable information on the selection of proper sands, and actually ended up as IT guru for the day after my laptop had a hissy fit (it worked perfectly well in the shed before I left, but when we got to Burnham would it work? No.) Thanks again Mick.



Russell Talley, Architect from Hawtree Ltd, was actually able to name 25 different types of bunker - from a "Cop Bunker" (in vogue years ago at Wentworth etc) right through to the modern "Stadium Bunker". (This month's prize for the person who can name the other 23.)

Richard Whyman gave us perfect and enthusiastic instruction on how successfully to revet a bunker, and discussed his run up to the England Boys event in 2011.

Laurence Pithie, of the Crown Group, was the final speaker with samples of his huge arsenal of digi-pics from around the world. He gave good detail of how to determine when to rebuild bunkers, and an indication of how long bunkers are likely to last. Interesting point that - most members would be certain that bunkers are static, and there forever - whereas the reality is that bunkers have a finite life and need renovation and attention just like anything else.

An analysis of man hours shows that bunkers can take as much time, if not more, to maintain as greens.

We made a point of inviting Captains, Lady Captains and Club Officials to help get across the difficulties faced on a daily basis by greenkeepers in preparing bunkers for play. I really do hope it has helped.

Please feel free to suggest any further topics you would like to see. There is the possibility of further excavator safety training, and now also operator training for complete novices in the New Year - please let me know if you're interested.

Courtesy of our Patronage Partners, there is a sponsored place at Harrogate on the coach - please send in a letter to Chris Sealey explaining why you would be deserving of consideration and what you would hope to gain from attending.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Paul Worster
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk
01453 837355.



DEVON & CORNWALL

Our meeting and AGM in October took place on a very pleasant day at the wonderful St Mellion complex where, to say the least, there's 'a bit going on'. Attendance as you can imagine was high with 63 either playing golf or on the course walk. Thanks as per usual to our sponsors.

The golf (individual Stableford) for the Don Hunt trophy was played on the front nine of each course which made it quite unique and very enjoyable.

The results were: 1. Tony Hersey, Stover GC, 36pts; 2. John Welsford HGK, Warren GC, 35pt; 3. Chris Ralph, Hele Park, 32pts. Longest Drive was won by Adam Bridgewater, Yelverton GC, one of our Devon county players; and Nearest the Pin on the par 3 was won by myself.

Thanks to Mike 'bushy' Bush Course Manager for putting up with us for the day, and to him and his staff for providing us with 18 holes in wonderful condition. When you consider all the other work, course redesigning etc that is going on at present and the recent wet spell we've had it's a real credit to them!

Thank you to all the hotel staff for their hospitality and for the use of their venue, and the catering staff for the lovely meal they provided.

Before the AGM we had a draw for an all expenses paid trip (paid for by the Section) to Harrogate for a young greenkeeper or someone new to greenkeeping next January which was won by Pete Standen, Course Manager, from Sidmouth Golf Club.

The AGM took place after the meal and the prize giving's with pretty much everybody in attendance.

Justin Austin, our Chairman, opened the meeting and passed over to Rob Guntrip, our President, who gave a summary of the past 12 months and by thanking all the committee for all their efforts and hard work over this period.

The minutes of the last AGM were then read and duly passed. Andy Parker CM Crediton Golf Club was voted on to the committee with Steve Evans standing down on rotation.

Any other business was taken and the chairman then gave an overall summary and the meeting was closed.

Finally just to remind everybody our Christmas meeting this year is at Bude Golf club where the entertainment will be provided by 'Tank Sherman'!

Jerry Cole
07764 224582
greenwaysjrc@aol.com

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

BIGGA's Regional Administrators



Peter Boyd
SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440
Mobile: 07776 242120
Email: pj.boyd@btinternet.com



Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
Tel: 01476 550115
Mobile: 07866 366966
Email: petelarter972@aol.com



Clive Osgood
SOUTH EAST
Tel: 01737 819343
Mobile: 07841 948410
Email: cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk



Jane Jones
SOUTH WEST & WALES
Tel: 01454 270850
Mobile: 07841 948110
Email: janejones1@btconnect.com