



News from the Chief Executive

As another year draws to an end let us look back at 2007, at what has been achieved.

There seems to be a number of members dissatisfied with the performance of the Association voicing opinions on not only the BIGGA website but on other parties' websites. I am disappointed these people do not feel able to contact HQ and air their views, sometimes there is a simple and logical answer. I do not have any excuses and the buck stops with me for the efficiency of the office. My only wish is it had not been necessary to make the staff cut backs we did - we are now missing those extra pairs of hands. However, like all commercial operations we need to balance the books - we reduced a budgeted loss of £133k down to an actual loss of £1,800 in 2007. I'm accused of being out of touch with the grass roots membership but no one knows better than I how tough it is in golf today, and HQ staff and myself try to attend as many Region and Section events as time allows. Please also remember the RAs are members of HQ staff and I speak with them on a regular basis.

I get accused of not communicating with the members however I find it equally frustrating that members do not communicate with me! Let's look at what we have achieved this year: tens of thousands of pounds spent on subsidising Regional, Section and National training and education, over £15k spent on education grants to individual members, RA support to members at disciplinary meetings, financial support for families following the accidental death of several members, a better than expected financial result thereby helping medium term stability, in my view a much better acceptance by the other bodies in golf of the professional standing of the Association and its members, a new website - the list goes on. I'm sure many of your golfers' expectations could be realised if you had a large enough budget, well I'm in the same position as Chief Executive. I have 6,500 members many of whom have differing views on life, views that sometimes are unachievable.

2008? There is no doubt in my mind golf as an industry is starting to feel the commercial squeeze. Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers must address their management training needs if they are going to cope. It's no good just being a good greenkeeper any more, in order to survive those with responsibility need their skills honing. BIGGA has helped in the past and aims to provide more 'bite size' management training modules in the future. It will be teaming up with the GTC, the Home Unions, the GCMA and potentially the PGA to address training issues, in particular at management level. This doesn't mean we will be abandoning those below CM/HG - suitable training courses will be arranged where there is sufficient demand.

Learning and Development is no longer an option but a necessity, part of BIGGA's aim is to get better support for this by the employer. I've been proud to represent the Association at various meetings and conferences during 2007 where I have always been treated with respect. Times have moved on and so must we but we can only succeed through unity.

I wish everyone a trouble free 2008. Let's hope the sun shines, the puts drop and golfers recognise the difference between 'nice to have' and 'achievable'!

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH – AYRSHIRE

Firstly, hope you're all well and had a great time over the Festive season. It's been a while since you've heard from me but never mind eh!

To catch up on last year's relevant news I'll start with the classified results from the Autumn outing at Shiskine GC which were as follows: Middlesbrough 0 , seriously now!

Harry Diamond Jug – G. Morrison – 1.1 G. Morrison; 1.2 B. Aitken; 1.3 B. Gray; 1.4 I. MacDonald; 1.5 S. Higgins. 2.1 G. Taggart; 2.2 R. Bunting; 2.3 I. Barr; 2.4 D. Gray; 2.5 M. Sloss. Trade Prize- Alistair Taylor

Our thanks to the club for allowing us the tee times, to the friendly staff who served up some delicious fare and refreshments and to the Head Greenkeeper and his crew for presenting a fine course on a dry day with a touch of gale force winds added for extra effect!

The BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota, held over The Dundonald GC and Kilmarnock Barassie GC in October, I am told, was a resounding success with a couple of local boys picking up top prizes! Clandeboye GC hosted the second playing of our match v the County Down Greenkeepers and although we only had four from the Section it seemed like eight or was that just the Guinness? No, we managed to hire four mercenaries who did a grand job. Before the result I would just like to say a massive thanks to Terry Crawford for arranging all the tee times and pub crawls and everything! Cheers pal! To the club and all the staff who made the trip so memorable we really had a great time, thanks! And last but not least the greenkeepers themselves who made us most welcome. Oh! And that rep who insisted on getting the first four rounds of drinks in for all! Nice one!

The result ended 3 – 1 to the home side, but came right down to the wire with myself and Colin Shanks just missing out on a half at the 18th and Duncan Gray and his partner, Ronnie, losing their match after being 3 up with 4 to play! I ken! It was all in good spirit and Duncan made up for it by holding an impromptu lecture at the hotel at 2am that night - much to the night porter's delight!

On to recent news then, George Morrison, Largs GC, and John Wilson, Bogside, are the Patron's Award winner's this year. Congrats lads! The Portland course at Troon will be the venue for the Spring with the date in April to be finalised. The Pines GC, in Dumfries, will host the Autumn Outing where we will also be trying to arrange the match with the Irish Greenkeepers, but it's a long way off so watch this space every few months or so? Adios mis amigos and remember "Let's be careful out there"

Denis Tweddell denis.t@hotmail.co.uk 07939 104701



CENTRAL

Hi, I hope everyone has recovered from the excesses of Christmas and New Year and have a quiet spell before it all starts up again at Harrogate towards the end of the month.

Around the Green

The Central Section had a very successful evening seminar at Elmwood on November 28 when 40 people turned up to hear Prof John Kaminski, of Connecticut, Prof Mike Fidanza of Penn State and Stan Zontek of the USGA Greens Section give presentations on Dollar Spot, Fairy Ring and growth regulators. A larger report has been posted on the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Unfortunately I was unable to attend as I was in Marseille giving a presentation to the French Greenkeepers Association, AGREF, at their annual conference and show, Green Expo. Although the show is nowhere as large as BTME, there were over 500 people attending from a membership of around 1,000. Like Harrogate it was also partly a social occasion while they have strong desire continually to improve and a healthy thirst for knowledge. There was also a strong representation from the French Golf Federation with whom they have a strong relationship.

Five members of the Central Section were part of a delegation taken to the RJ factory at Ipswich by Ian Bridges and Scottish dealers Fairways (GM). They had an interesting visit looking at the latest additions to the RJ product range, the ongoing factory upgrades and the investment in training which included the progress on the recently commissioned three hole golf facility on site, designed by Howard Swan.

Congratulations to Simon Connah, of St Andrews Links, and his partner, Niki, on the birth of their second child and welcome to new member, Steven Wilson, who is an Assistant Greenkeeper at the Duke's Course.

The venue of the spring meeting has yet to be confirmed by the club in question but this will be finalised shortly and posted on the website. Invites will be sent out to members in early March along with a newsletter similar to last year. If anyone has any news about things happening in the area then please contact myself at gordonmoir@standrews.org.uk

Gordon Moir



EAST

I start this month with a sincere thank you to our Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, for all his sterling efforts throughout the year, which culminated in organising the Patrons' Lunch at the Terraces Hotel in Stirling.

The education meeting at Oatridge Collage on November 16, was attended by several committee members when the main discussion point was future training programmes, with particular emphasis on Levels 3 and 4. The aim is to organise 'bite' size training days in key areas in these two levels.

Our congratulations this month go to Martin Kohler, Kingsknowe Golf Club, and his partner, Paula, on the arrival of a daughter, Alicia. I understand from Stevie that Martin will be allocated some light duties, until he becomes immune to the sleepless nights!

On December 4, greenkeepers from across Scotland attended an educational day at Carnoustie Golf Links. We were met by Golf Course Superintendent, John Philp who enthralled all with a guided tour of the championship course. His technical knowledge and enthusiasm for his

subject were there for all to see. On behalf of everyone in attendance I would like to thank John for giving us some of his valuable time, and for his courtesy on the day. The Dinner Dance on Saturday, December 8 at the Kilspindie House Hotel, Aberlady, with 30 in attendance. A good time was had by all. Next year's Dinner Dance will be held at the same venue on Saturday, December 6 – book the date now to avoid disappointment!

Our former Chairman, Graeme Wood, is making a slow but steady recovery from his illness, at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Edinburgh, where he is getting regular physiotherapy sessions. Our thoughts are with Graeme and his wife, Helen, at this time.

Until next month, Mike Dooner



NORTH

Happy New Year to everybody, hope it was prosperous for all. Another year is upon us God knows what kind of weather we will get this year. Hopefully drier and warmer than last year.

Harrogate is just around the corner and will be eagerly anticipated by greenkeepers around the country. Not much happening in the Section at the moment to talk about. One new member is Grant Hope, Apprentice Greenkeeper at Dufftown Golf Club, welcome to the North Section Grant. Also William Shepherd, First Assistant at Ellon GC – Welcome William.

Kevin Strachan has kindly agreed to sponsor the 200 Club next year so our thanks go to him for this kind gesture. Kevin has been busy at a few clubs in the Northeast with his screener and tilt buckets making new tees and bunkers. He is currently in at Royal Aberdeen G C re-constructing the 1st and 6th tees, which are being re-developed at the moment and some mounding features to screen some holes on the back nine prior to the Walker Cup in 2011. This is part of a long-term plan with new bunkers and tees added and more mounding between holes planned for the next three years.

Murcar Golf Club recently won the Scottish Tourist Board Golf Club of the Year. It was awarded for excellence in all areas of the club. The award was presented at a ceremony at the St Andrews Bay Golf hotel to the Captain of the club, Steven Price. This is tremendous achievement for the club considering they were up against Kingsbarns, Carnoustie to name but a few. Martin Fullerton, Assistant at Murcar is going to be a dad again in the summer. Murcar are also pushing on with more alterations to extend and toughen up the course with new tees and bunkers being added around the course.

Robert N Patterson



WEST

Welcome to this month's report. I would like to congratulate Kerr Hunter who was appointed Course Manager at Gleddoch Golf Club earlier in the year. Kerr was Assistant at Hilton Park and then went on to Dumbarton

Around the Green

Golf Club as First Assistant. The Section would like to wish you all the best in your new post. I apologise for being so late with this news.

In my last report I forgot to mention that Robert Bruce won the trade prize at our autumn outing at the Vale of Leven GC. Sorry Robert and many congratulations on your prize.

Committee news—this year's AGM was held at Higgs Castle on a very wet and windy day but the good news was there were approximately 50 members in attendance. Gordon Homes, of CSC, was the first guest speaker talking on primo-max growth regulator. The talk was very informative and was received very well from the body of the hall. Also to Stuart Ashworth, from Indigrow, who did a first class speech on their product list.

Douglas Macintosh, Chairman, conducted the proceedings very well covering all areas on the agenda so well done, also for your hard work over the past year. We still have no Vice Chairman to take over from Dougie for 2009 so anyone interested please get in touch. Many thanks to the Captain and committee for the use of their facilities and for courtesy of the course afterwards.

Stuart Taylor, our education convenor is stepping down. Stuart has done a great job over the past few years and all on committee would like to wish him all the best for the future. I will be taking over on education and I am planning a seminar for late March/early April.

There are also several training courses organised over the next few months any clubs interested please contact Fraser Ross for details, courses can be organised with topics that will suit the needs of the members.

Trade news - Kenny Hunter has returned from foreign shores, after spending the last couple of years in Dubai working for Toro. Kenny has decided to return home as he was missing the great Scottish weather, he has taken up a post with Bernard's so you will see him over the next couple of months after he settles in. Welcome back Kenny we look forward to seeing you at the Section events over the next year.

I went along to the Scotsturf show during November and I was very impressed with this year's set up. The show was very busy with a wide range of companies showing their wide range of products and machinery.

Clubmasters v Greenkeepers match - This year's match was held over Clobber Golf Club with the Clubmasters coming out on top after a close match. I would like to apologise to the clubmasters for the lack of team members from the Greenkeepers, next year we will make sure we have a full team so we can win back the trophy.

Many thanks to Clobber Golf Club for the use of their course and to the staff for their hard work on the day. I would like to thank Gary Smith, from Scott's, for sponsoring the day and for the continued support from the Scott's company.

Annual night out - This year's bash was held at Jongulars Comedy Club on November 23. A total of 20 members attended and the general feed back was very good, if anyone is interested next year's bash will be in the same place so put it in your diary for 2008.

The STRI will be holding a seminar at Loch Lomond Golf Club on February 19, the topic will be The Disturbance Theory on the Golf Course, there will be a limited number of places available so if your interested please get in contact with myself or David Carson Rigby Taylor.

Fraser Ross 07970 366 355 Karen.ross@tesco.net



NORTHERN – NORTH EAST

Firstly in the news this month is Tony McLure, of Whickham GC, who was trying to qualify to play on the Seniors European Tour. Playing at Quinta de Cima GC in the Algarve. Tony shot two 75s to finish in the top half of the field and finishing joint 13th to qualify for the finals the following week. The finals were played at Pestano Golf Resorts[Pinta Course] where Tony did quite well with scores of 76,70,71,75 and just missing out on qualifying for the tour next year by three shots not bad for first attempt and probably surprised a lot of people on his ability to play in the Seniors Tour. No doubt Tony will be trying again in 2008.

Vandalism is still ripe around the golf courses, Newcastle Utd GC are currently losing up to three and half dozen flagsticks each week, damage to the irrigation boxes, branches torn off trees and then smashed up a memorial bench. Let's hope it quiets down.

Another greenkeeper is on the move, David Cuthbertson, Course Manager at Slaley Hall, will have took up a new post by the time you read this. He is moving to Rockcliffe Hall GC this is a new course under construction and I believe it is owned by the Chairman of Middlesborough Football Club. I wish you well Davy for the future, if you are still going to support Sunderland you'd better think twice on that one.

And lastly if any of you are going to Harrogate as I said in the last report, I will be on the BIGGA stand and look forward to meeting you. Well I won't be there this year or any other year as I have had my services rendered after 20 years and it's all down to technology over the last couple of years. I had been doing less and less so I will most likely see some of you when I pop down for a day. If any of you have any news just give me a ring or send an email.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTH WEST

I hope everyone has had a great Christmas and look forward to seeing some of you at Harrogate in the coming week.

This is a very quiet time of the year so I don't expect too much news. Here is the contact information for anyone who requires it. The Secretary Bert Cross on 0151 7245412 or myself, Chris Sheehan on 0151 2894625 my e-mail is jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk for golf tournament details contact Billy Merritt at The Lodge, Beacon Park GC, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Mobile no. 07985175825.

Chris Sheehan



SHEFFIELD

On December 3 we held our Christmas golf competition followed by our AGM. May I take this opportunity to thank the Captain, Brian Haxton and Worksop Golf Club for the courtesies of the course.

Once again, we were made very welcome and I would like to pass on congratulations to Tim and his staff for the wonderful condition of the course. Also thanks must go to the catering staff, bar staff and David Dufall for all their help in making this day a success. The sponsors of these events also play a major part in making the day successful and this competition's sponsor was Rigby Taylor, whose representative, Mike Brear, provided us with an excellent prize table.

The winners of the competition were: 1. Richard Jones, 38 pts, H/C 0; 1.2 Darren Coop, 38 pts, H/C 0; 1.3 Andrew Bunting, 37 pts, H/C 11; 1.4 Colin Hopper 34 pts, H/C 8; 1.5 Paul Hill, 34 pts, H/C 14; 1.6 Kevin Hazlehurst, 34 pts, H/C 16. Guest winners: Ian Collett, 35 pts, H/C 15; Gary Bardhill, 32 pts, H/C 15. Nearest the pin: Peter Fell, 72 inches.

A big thank you goes to all our sponsors and supporters throughout the year. Thanks to Steve for running the raffle! A special mention goes to James Whelan, of Rotherham Golf Club - well done.

On a serious note would all members please be aware that in future no application forms for golf competitions will be accepted after the official closing date that is on the form. This also includes any telephone calls. All forms must be accompanied with the correct payment required. The forms are sent out in plenty of time and therefore there is no excuse for late arrivals.

AGM - Last year's minutes were read and passed. Next year's golf competitions are: May 12, Coxmoor GC; July 7 - Grange Park GC; July 23 - Otley GC; Sheffield Section v Northern Section - September 9, Hallamshire GC. Christmas competition TBA. The Treasurer's and Secretary's reports were read and passed. Chris Astle announced his resignation after seven years as Section Secretary. I am sure you would all like to join with the Committee in thanking Chris for all his hard work for the Section.

Election of Officials - President, N. Maltby; Chairman, G. Brammah; Vice Chairman N. Maltby; Secretary, J. Stevens; Treasurer, A. Sampson; Competitions, R. Needham and S. Currie; Committee, C. Astle, A. Unwin, J. Lax. The Committee would like to ask that all members, in future, wear their BIGGA ties to all Section functions.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to say I hope you have had a good Christmas and have a great New Year.

Robert Needham



MIDLANDS

Education and Training News – After a busy few weeks which have seen the Irrigation Workshop, excavator training and Noise and Vibration Management seminar, I had just about had time to sit down and digest

some of the feedback from the events. It appears that there would be sufficient interest in running a one day 'Irrigation Electrical Fault Finding workshop'. The subject was briefly covered during the event at The Belfry but a purpose hands-on day may be worthwhile. Please let me know if you are interested. I have also had an enquiry about running a 'Pesticides Update and Refresher course'. This again would be a hands-on refresher covering latest legislation, calibration and techniques. We would need a minimum of 10 candidates for this event. There is also a possibility of running another excavator course. It is important that you confirm your interest as soon as possible so I can make arrangements according to the demand.

Paul Woodham



EAST MIDLANDS

Just to remind everybody that entries have been sent out for the Go Karting with the Christmas Tournament Entry slips, for the event that takes place on February 20. Closing date for entries will be the January 21, non members of golf clubs will then be approached to fill the remaining places. Five-A-Side Football will be taking place the week before Harrogate please ring the Secretary Dan Rodgers on 07745 227224.

Dan Rodgers Shirland Golf Club www.shirlandgolfclub.co.uk



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all and welcome to my first column for these pages. Firstly I would like to thank Allan Walker for his contributions over the last couple of years. Hopefully you will enjoy reading what I have to write and if anyone has any news or information you would like to be included then don't hesitate to contact me. As you know I have to write this over a month before you read it so I will try my best to make it as up to date as possible.

I hope everybody had a good Christmas and New Year and is ready to face the challenges that 2008 will bring. Ideally that won't include three feet of water on the fairways in June!

January means that BTME is on the horizon and our annual pilgrimage to Harrogate. As a thank-you to all our golf day sponsors, we will be having a reception in the St George Hotel (across the road from the show) at 2pm on the Tuesday. All Section members are welcome to attend.

Tuesday, November 27 saw our first winter seminar at Peterborough Milton Golf Club. The day was well attended and we were treated to interesting and informative presentations from Sam Maclean, of Bernhard and Co, and Jim Mackenzie, from Celtic Manor Resort. There was also a grinding demonstration from Bernhards Tournament Support team. Many thanks go to Bernhards for sponsoring the day, to Sam and Jim and to Peterborough Milton for their hospitality. A seminar day is also being organised for February, full details to follow.

As I write this, our last golf day of the year is due to take place at Market Rasen. I am sure that John and his team will have had the course

Around the Green

in top condition for all of us and there will definitely have been some entertainment in the Christmas bring and win prize draw.

Most of the 2008 golf fixtures have been finalised, starting with Pottergate GC in April. A full fixture list will be here next month and will also be placed on the website. Once again if anyone has any news or information for me then I can be contacted on

Steve Beverly www.eastofenglandbigga.com
07932516633 or steveimingham@aol.com



BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

Happy New Year! Since January is named after Janus, the Roman god of gates and openings, this gives us all an ideal time to look back on the past year and forward to the New Year.

To make sure all goes well in the New Year, the Annual General meeting was held on 21 November at the Beaconsfield GC situated in a lovely part of Buckinghamshire on the edge of the Chiltern hills when the following were elected to serve for 2008: Sid Arrowsmith, Chairman, Alec MacIndoe, Education, Dean Jones, Secretary, Frank Booth, Treasurer, Alistair Higgs, Match/Handicap Secretary and yours truly – Scribe for another year. All ably assisted by Committee Members, Dan Lightfoot, Matt Smith and newly appointed Erik Kinlon. A thoroughly enjoyable day was organised by Keith Willcox, Club Secretary and David Jennings, Catering Manager kept the wolf from the door aided and abetted by Alf and Pauline behind the bar at the impressive clubhouse looking out over the course.

A relaxed Texas Scramble format with a chance to experience this Harry Colt masterpiece over this nicely bunkered course with large greens was indeed a true pleasure and educational experience to all who took part.

Bill Patterson and his staff are to be congratulated for, despite several days torrential rainfall, they ensured its fine condition to the delight of all who played and the following winners: Dougie McGregor – Long Drive, Graham Down – Nearest the Pin. Winners of the Avoncrop Cup were 1st the Green Rings – Alec McIndoe, A. Thrift, G. Ferris and E. Kinlon; 2nd Burnham Boys – S. Lawson, C. Lillitou, Rob Hogan and L. Bishop; and 3rd Goody's Mob – A. Higgs, C. Taylor, D. Goodchild and C.Small. The Ely Cup presented to the Golfer of the Year was awarded to Ben Kebby, from The Berkshire GC. Thank you to Barry McCloskey, and Avoncrop, for sponsoring this event and to all the other trade who participated and sponsored us throughout 2007.

In early November the Buckinghamshire GC hosted a Seniors Tour event playing for The Kingdom of Bahrain Trophy. This event was not scheduled on the tour to be played in the UK and to the shock and surprise of Erik Kinlon and his team, with only several weeks' notice, he had to produce a course fit for tournament conditions. After a bit of double bubble and working late into the night this world class golfing venue was transformed to provide a stiff test for the elite of the European Seniors Tour.

Greenkeeper members through the region provided Erik and his team with support in preparing the course over the tournament which was a

great success. Erik would like to thank all the team who volunteered their time and effort and he has promised to provide you all with a Celtic shirt and a pint at Harrogate.

No mention has been made about any New Year Resolutions but I did hear a rumour about a rep who goes by the name of Roger Clarke, a former West Ham fan, who apparently became disillusioned with the Hammers and after a weak moment in Portugal fuelled by Sangria, decided to have a tattoo of the MK Dons stamped where the sun don't shine. If there is any member unfortunate enough to have witnessed this, please contact Ross, at Abbey Hill GC, who will provide all the necessary counselling.

Looking forward to 2008 – make a note in your diary about the Harrogate BTME exhibition which is just about upon us. You know it is a good idea to come and see everything under one roof and see what is the latest on show – all designed to make life easier and with education on the agenda it must go to the top of your list.

I hope many of you can make the journey and I look forward to seeing you there. Best wishes to you all!

Mark Day mark@tacitgolf.com



MID-ANGLIA SECTION

Happy New Year One and all, I hope you were able to enjoy the festive holidays even though I am sure your respective golf courses have been very busy. Harrogate is just around the corner and I look forward to seeing those of you making the pilgrimage this year. It is sure to be another good show with some interesting speakers and all you could wish to see.

On the educational front, the Mid-Anglia Section are running two courses in the early part of the new year. There is a Chainsaw course and also a Sprayer Update course, so any interested parties please contact Gerald Bruce, at Berkhamsted Golf Club, who can provide further details. Golf this year kicks off with the spring tournament at the Bedfordshire Golf Club. The summer competition is to be held at either Cherwell Hills or Silverstone. Panshangar hosts the autumn event and finally, tour cards for the following year will be decided at Chesfield Downs. More details to follow later.

Open Championship qualifying takes place at Ashridge on July 2 and is well worth a visit – you might even carry a bag if you are so inclined! And congratulations to Jim Cassidy and his wife on the arrival of their son, Conor James Cassidy, who I am told is very cute and chatty. Also, good luck to Chris Hunt, of Woburn, who is embarking on an exciting new venture.

Let's all keep our fingers crossed that winter doesn't last too long and that spring actually decides to turn up this year. If you have any items of interest please call me on the number below.

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



SOUTH EAST – SURREY



G'Day and Happy New Year possums. I'm just getting over jet lag after my journey down under so this report is going to be short and sweet. I'll show you the bite mark that the Great White gave me when I call as it's just above the scar that the crocs tail left when he tried to get away. But enough of this 'Steve Irwin' chat for it's time for another jab of the anti snake bite serum and a little blow on my digeridoo.

England vs Scotland at Hankley Common GC on November 7 was another draw so England retain the trophy. I just wonder what the result would have been had I not had to go to Australia. Greenkeepers vs Secretaries at The Berkshire GC on November 28 was a victory for the BIGGA boys by one point. Report on the Turkey Trot and AGM will appear in the February edition as will full details of my day by day Australian adventure.

Brian (Koala) Willmott



KENT

Happy New Year! I hope you are all looking forward to what promises to be a great year for us in Kent as we have five, yes five, golf events confirmed at some great venues in all corners of the county. If you have not yet received a fixture list then please consult our website for full event details. We are now preparing a similar sized event list for 2009 so if you want the glory of hosting a day for your greenkeeping colleagues please contact us via the website.

Our Turkey Trot, at Birchwood Park, was a resounding success. On a morning where the rain clouds threatened briefly 45 of us were greeted by glorious winter sunshine at the first tee as well as Vic Maynard and the Ernest Doe's refreshment wagon. I can honestly say that I played my best round ever (a gross 82) and foolishly believed that 43 points might give me a chance of winning! That was until Gary "The Mexican" Branchett rolled into town with his amigos. I shall attribute his 48 point winning total to the condition of the course which my team had presented in fine fettle again. Gary won the Scott's Shield for his efforts and a 14lb turkey, as well as earning himself a considerable cut from the handicap secretary next time out! Everybody was a winner on the day, however, as bottles of wine were presented to all who attended the most popular golf event the section have staged thus far.

A very brief AGM followed a fine Christmas dinner where Kev Morris managed to wrap up proceedings in about five minutes flat! Basically, the committee will stay on in their current roles and there were no issues raised from the assembled masses. The rest of the evening was a great laugh as we all thoroughly enjoyed each others company in the bar. For details of this part of the day ask someone else! We would like to thank all our colleagues who have regularly attended our golf days and seminars and, again, our growing list of superb sponsors. Without their support the section would seriously struggle as their funding helps us subsidise all our events and provide prizes for the winners. Please show your support for them in the coming season. I hope to see a few of you at Harrogate soon. Best of luck for the coming year.

Rob Holland

SUSSEX



Hello again. I hope you are all well and have had a good year. It does seem to have passed us by quickly again. by the time you read this Christmas will have come and gone, you never know we may have had our first real frost. What a strange year we have had weather wise, you must wonder what the new year has in store for us.

There has been a few events happen recently, the first of which is the football match we had against Surrey which held at three bridges football club. I would like to thank John Wart, from Albourne Irrigation, for sponsoring the pitch and also a big thanks to mike ring and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the kit. The game was not for the faint hearted and was full of commitment. Surrey scored early doors and we equalised through Dan Beard. Unfortunately Surrey were to strong for us and it ended 4-1 to Surrey. The score was a bit flattering but congratulations to them and a big thank you to Dave Langham for sorting out things his end. The pictures are of the Sussex team and of the hand over of the new kit between Vice Chairman, Matt Crosslegs and the sponsors Rigby Taylor, represented by Mike Ring.

The next event was the AGM which was held at the Dyke GC. We did have a nine hole competition which was sponsored kindly by Gary Ogilvy (an ugly more irritating Ian Beale) from Avoncrop. There was a good turn out for the AGM this year, with 16 members in attendance.

Derek Farrington has stepped down as Secretary, so a big thanks to Derek for all his hard work. His replacement is Dave Allen, from Singing Hills, who was brave enough to step up to the plate.

The last event of the calendar was the Turkey Trot which was held at Worthing Golf Club. The course was in lovely condition and a big thanks to George Barr and his team for providing such a great venue. A big thank to everyone at Worthing Golf Club for their great hospitality. Also good luck to Ian Stevens, the Secretary of Wothing, who is moving on to pastures green in Devon. He did say we are all welcome to visit, apart from George! The sponsors of the day were Avoncrop so a big thanks to them and Gary O.

Moving on to the results; 56pts T. Bremer, A. freeman, M. Harvey and I. Sellars; 54pts J. Edmonds, A. Jones, C. Wells and D. Roddis; 54pts G. Ogilvy, D. Hinks, J. Coles and Sean; 52pts T. Woolley, D. Ansell, D. Farrington and P. Day; 52pts M. Crossley, P. Crossley, G. Scott and P. Scott; 51pts P. Ward, J. Budd, and K. Myers; 51pts R. Short, N. Baillee, M. Reed and C. Lusty; 50pts G. Pollard, E. Green and D. Ray; 49pts unknown; 48pts R. Hudson, P. Dunbar, S. MCarthy and N. Simpson; 48pts G. Barr, I. Evans, D. Howie and Mclizar; 48pts D. Beard, D. Allen, S. Lake and D. King Spooner;

47pts East Brighton GC lead by Andy Painter; 46pts B. Waters, C. Waters, R. Azvan and T. Stone; 46pts Less Shrub and co; 45pts Palmers; 45pts M. Gould, M. Willow, P. Ray and D. Haskell. Thank you to everyone who attended, we had a great day and an even better evening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for there support over the year. Have a great Christmas a look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Rob Hudson

Around the Green

ESSEX



The Christmas Tournament and AGM took place at Orsett Golf Club at the end of November on a typical overcast autumn's day with grey skies but slight warmth in the air. A very well presented course was laid out not for the faint hearted, with some cunning pin positions there to deceive.

The format, new to most was, a Progressive Stableford. The best two scores on the first six, best three on the second and all four on the final six. This format certainly makes you work as team and also puts a competitive edge on the team game. Having asked around most found it a better way to end the season than our previous Christmas matches of Texas scramble.

Following the golf, the AGM took place and was attended by around 70 members guests and trade. Chairman Don Clark led the proceedings and after introducing the committee went through the normal AGM issues. He then went onto thank the sponsors of this year's events; Avoncrop Amenity, Banks Amenity Products, Ernest Doe & Sons, Rigby Taylor and Tacit. He also thanked all the trade who kindly sponsored the raffle table for all of our events. Neil Peachey and P Tuckwell Ltd for their sponsorship of the section calendar and Andy Turbin and Ernest Doe & Sons for sponsoring the inaugural, Essex, Surrey and Sussex regional golf event held at Colne Valley.

New rules for the Section have been drawn up and the membership were asked to approve these, they are now posted on the website. No new committee members came forward for election so on block the committee were re-elected to the positions of: - Chairman, Don Clark, Secretary, Martin Forrester, Treasurer, Tom Smith, Competitions, Antony Kirwan, Education, Paul O'Kane, Press Officer, Arnold Phipps-Jones. Antony announced that the first team knockout had been a success, though there was still the final to play. Next year's knock-out will start earlier so as to give members more time to arrange and play their respected games. Watch this space and also the website to find out about entry details.

After the AGM the year's trophies were presented to the five winners of the tournaments this year, Gosfield Lakes Golf Club, Nick Gates, Theydon Bois Golf Club, Adam Millward, Colchester Golf Club, Ray Clark, North Weald Golf Club, Don Clark, Golfer of the Year went to Adam Millward, and Trade Member of the Year, Michael Fance.

The evening meal was served, followed by the prizes for the day: 1st on C/B 114 points, Steve Vale, Malcolm Smith, Kyle Smith, Neil Tutton; 2nd on C/B 114 points, Antony Kirwan, Neil Peachey, Roy Sprong, Steve Crossdale. 3rd on C/B 114 points, Mark Keysell, Andy Cracknell, Mark Stopps, Gary Smith; 4th on 113 points, Steve Denton Chris Wild, Arnold & Mark Phipps-Jones. Longest Drive, John Potticary. Nearest the Pin, Neil Tutton. Andy Turbin of Ernest Doe & Sons presented the prizes, to whom we thank for sponsoring the day. Our thanks also go to Orsett Golf Club for allowing us the course for the day and to Don Clark and his team for a course to be proud of.

Next year's events are at the following venues Upminster, Warley Park, Three Rivers, Bentley, and The Essex, dates will be coming in the New Year.

I would like to wish you all a belated Happy New Year and a good Greenkeeping year ahead. Contact me at highwoods.photographic@talktalk.net or call me on 01206-852.353

Arnold Phipps-Jones



SOUTH WEST AND WALES – SOUTH WEST

A Very Happy New Year to everyone in the South West. Many congratulations to Jane and the South West Regional Board for the very interesting and informative seminar at Cannington back in November. All speakers excelled themselves, and despite one or two technical problems the day was a huge success. Jim McKenzie gave us a fascinating insight into everything involved in getting the Celtic Manor Resort ready for the 2010 Ryder Cup, and Colin Webber gave the most amazingly frank and emotional account of the building and opening of his Portmore Course. Well done and thanks to all.

Further NVQ 3 one day courses are arranged at Cannington College as follows – and having attended two of the last three myself, I can't recommend attending these forthcoming days too highly. Remember, you don't have to be enrolled for the full NVQ to attend. 07.01.2008 – Golf Course Presentation. 27.02.2008 – Manage Oneself. 26.3.2008 – Create Grassed & Planted areas.

Contact George Pitts, at Bridgwater College, on 01278 655144 or 07929 754401 or email pittsg@bridgwatercollege.ac.uk to discuss content and times etc. Not too much else to report this month – I've just represented Nobby at the annual Section Secretaries meeting at BIGGA House. The purpose of the day was to meet the staff team, and hear about all the latest initiatives, news, and national Association activities, and to report back to the membership. The scope and depth of the work at HQ is actually quite amazing, and the whole staff team are just so enthusiastic. There's no question that times are hard in the golf industry, and it's necessary to diversify and think outside the box to balance the books. But against somewhat of a global downturn – their enthusiasm and dedication is making it work.

But they can't do it without our support, input, and participation as members. Harrogate Week looks like being a big success again, but will only be confirmed as such, by all of us attending. I always try to place my early spring orders while I'm there as an encouragement.

Back at Minchinhampton we've had yet another break-in. The door to an old outbuilding (which is actually right in the middle of the golf course), was kicked in for the umpty-eighth time. This has happened so frequently that we don't actually store anything worthwhile in there – just one or two old railway sleepers on the floor, and an owl-box in the rafters. But as there had been a spate of recent local break-ins, I thought I'd do my duty as a good citizen and report it. I'd got five minutes before a meeting so I rang the police non-emergency line, and this is a verbatim transcript of the conversation.

“Good morning, Gloucestershire Police – Rachel speaking, how may I help?” (It did sound more like an insurance company call-centre than the nerve-centre of Glos. police, but at that point I was prepared to give



her the benefit of the doubt.) “Good morning” I replied politely – “I’d like to report a break-in at Minchinhampton Golf Club please. The door to a storage barn on the course has been kicked in during the night – luckily the building was more-or-less empty so nothing was actually taken.” “Okay sir, no problem, I’ll just take a few details. “Your name please” – “Paul Worster – I’m the Course Manager”. “Thank you sir – your address please” - “17 Chesterton Grove, Cirencester..... “Thank-you sir, your date of birth please” – “27th January 1950...”. “Your Country of origin please sir” Er – Britain” “Your group of ethnicity please sir” (bit harder that one) “What? – Well Anglo-Saxon I suppose?” “ Thank you sir, but” (and here Rachel lowers her voice to a conspiratorial whisper) “actually I meant your colour please” “Ah” – (by this time the correct answer was actually bright red because I’m getting a bit fed up and Rachel’s got the hint) “Sorry sir, just a few more questions – it’s for Home Office statistics see?” “ Have you had occasion to contact the Police on this, or any other matter, within the last six months?” “Um, well, I did find a pair of spectacles in the street a little while ago and handed them in at Tetbury Police Station”. “Have you handed in spectacles before sir?” (By this time, I’m late for my meeting, I haven’t even started to report the crime, and to top it all I’ve just been branded a serial hander-in of spectacles.) At least you’d have thought that Rachel would be hard-pressed to make the conversation any more bizarre – right? Well actually no.

“Turning to the crime itself sir, where exactly did this take place?” “Like I told you,” I replied testily, “the door to an empty storage barn in the middle of the golf course was kicked in last- night”. “What time did this happen sir?” “During the bl*dy night” I muttered heavily – “sorry, say between 7pm and 7am.” “Was anything taken sir?” “No, luckily the barn was empty apart from two railway sleepers and an owl-box”. “Was there any CCTV footage sir?” “No not from the middle of the golf-course – but, ha ha, I suppose we could always ask the owl?” (By this time, Rachel is completely oblivious to my sarcasm, and sensing the finishing post ploughs on regardless). “Are there any forensics at the crime scene sir?” “No, the door is a pile of splintered matchwood, but come to think of it there were one or two feathers on the floor – hey, maybe we should pull the owl for questioning after all?” “Who is the victim in this particular case sir?” “Well what’s left of the door wasn’t looking too clever the last time I saw it, but I guess it’s the golf club”. “Okay, thank you sir, I’ll give you a crime number and you’ll be hearing from victim-support over the next few days – they can arrange counselling in case anyone’s been traumatised by this event”. (Of course the only person remotely traumatised was me - but that was by Rachel).

I couldn’t help thinking if I’d been reporting a bank-raid, the villains would have been off scot-free and at least a couple of time-zones away by the time Rachel had taken the details. How about some proper news from your clubs next month?

Paul Worster
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



SOUTH COAST SECTION

A very happy New Year to you all. Christmas is over and a lot of you will now be thinking about BTME at Harrogate. For those of you going, have a good time, enjoy the seminars and don’t drink too much!!

The last bit of business for 2007 for the Section was the Turkey Trot

held at Barton On Sea GC on December 5. For regular readers you will know I always make comment on the weather conditions for the day and how lucky we are to always get excellent weather. Well, this year’s weather was not perfect but considering everyone drove to Barton in monsoon conditions and that the rain cleared the conditions were not too bad. However, the wind was a touch strong and definitely freshened up the players. Sadly, I could not go outside as we were playing off two tees so with much regret I had to stay in the warm. I was informed from the players that the course was in magnificent condition, many congratulations and thank you to our chairman Tony Gadd and his team for presenting a great course. As usual we were very well looked after by the staff at Barton. Thank you to the catering, bar staff and all others at the club for looking after us and making us so welcome. The Captain Ray Hunt accompanied us for the day’s play and joined us for the meal and in a speech made us very welcome and also sponsored Nearest the Pin. Thank you Ray for your kindness. Our gratitude also goes to the sponsor for the day New Forest Farm Machinery and Blade Amenity - the Turkeys always go down very well! So the results for the day: Category 1- 0-10 (H’cap): 1. Rob Patrick, 36 pts: 2. Ed McCabe, 32 pts. Category 2 – 11-18 (H’cap): 1. Simon Justice, 32 pts: 2. Chris Bitten, 31pts. Category 3 – 19-28 (H’cap): 1. Ben Glass and overall winner for the day, 37 pts: 2. Les Uniacke, 27 pts. Nearest the Pin: Ray Meakin. Longest Drive (Sponsored by Rigby Taylor): strongman Chris Bitten! It has to be said that Kevan Glass on his first tournament organisation did an absolutely magnificent job. Tony Gadd thanked Kevan and everybody agreed with the compliment. Also Alan Magee wins a prize for top performing raffle ticket sales person and Chris Bitten spent £4 on tickets and won about a “million” pounds worth of prizes – well I’m sure you all agree he does deserve it.

Chris is working hard in the preparation of next year’s educational seminar which is planned to be held at Canford Magna GC sometime in March. More details are to follow. Back to Alan Magee: Alan is now the organiser for the Jim Fry Pairs Competition. Entries for the competition are to be sent to him at 12 Sutton Close, Poole, Dorset, BH17 8SS. The cost is £12 per pair. Standard FBBB rules apply with a nominated home course before the closing date. The closing date is March 31, 2008. Any questions please feel free to call Alan on 01202 606668.

As a reminder, the new Tournament Organiser is Kevan Glass. Please contact Kevan from now on for booking and payment of Golf Days at the following address: Apartment 1, Forge Side Court, Lepe Road, Langley, Southampton SO45 1SS or on mobile 07859 053054 or on e-mail: glassy2003@hotmail.com.

Have a great New Year!

Joe Crawley 07721 389200

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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