



News from the Chief Executive

July and the golf season is already half over, or so it seems to me. Because of injury I have not struck a ball in anger since January 3 and my wife is now wondering why I loyally paid my subscription earlier in the year. I too am calculating how many rounds I will need to get in before the end of the year to justify to her a renewal in 2009. The reality is that I will not be able, or allowed, to play the number of games now needed to bring the average cost per round down to an acceptable level. The more I talk to friends and other golfers and the more I communicate with other bodies within golf the more I realise that I am not alone.

The halcyon days of demand exceeding supply are over and will not return in my opinion. The golfer now has greater choice of venue, equipment, but less time to play and certainly an increasing demand on his financial resources. It is estimated that less than one in three golfers now pays a subscription, the preferred option being to adopt a 'Pay and Play' approach. Does that impact upon BIGGA? Yes, and in a big way.

We are all well aware of the financial constraints that many clubs are facing as they vie for members and visitors. The greenkeeping staff are all too often expected to produce better and better results with a budget that is at best, frozen. Greenkeepers become pressurised, stressed, disillusioned or perhaps in conflict with their employer and in extreme cases face legitimate, or fabricated, redundancy. The Association, which is after all your Association, is working with the other bodies in golf to resolve friction and wherever possible address issues before conflict arises. It is also in the process of putting in place a more effective and better publicised welfare and benevolent support system and I encourage any member who would be prepared to offer help to contact either myself or Tracey Maddison (Head of Membership Services at HQ). Our details are in the front of Greenkeeper International.

As less money changes hands in our part of the golf industry so companies spend less with BIGGA on advertising or the exhibition - an old chestnut that is not getting any better. None of us are exempt from the change in golf but the trick is to learn to adapt and develop wherever possible, in being prepared to take advantage of educational opportunities to develop one's ability to manage change and accept that change is inevitable. Greenkeepers often seem to be the sole victims of the changing face of golf but I assure you that they are not alone. Many golf club secretaries and managers are suffering the same pressures and gone is the day of it being a cushy second career, that's if it ever was in the first place!

Training and education is available through BIGGA and if you don't see what you want then contact your Section Secretary, your Regional Administrator or BIGGA HQ. Please view education as a lifelong experience and be proactive rather than reactive. We can help from basic literacy or numeric skills to perhaps higher education. There are grants and scholarships available and there is money in the industry sponsored BIGGA Learning and Development Fund but you, the member, need to take action.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive



SCOTTISH REGION - CENTRAL

As I sit and write this at the beginning of June, the weather appears to have taken a turn for the better and the growth looks to have arrived. How much longer before we hear the cries from our members "Aren't you going to cut that rough down!" Strange how they always want the rough cut but when it's gorse bushes or trees you cut back they hate it.

I'm sure everyone is busy at this time of year with the competition season in full swing but we have just had a hectic weekend in the St Andrews area with the Scottish Police Championships on the Devlin Course at St Andrews Fairmont Hotel, The Scottish Stroke Play Championships at the Dukes, a local Club's Championship qualifier on the New Course, an Open on the Jubilee Course and the Curtis Cup on the Old Course which attracted 4,000 spectators trampling over the Links.

Elmwood have just opened their full course after the alterations made there and the Castle Course opened on June 28. Now it is Fairmont's turn with the Torrance course closed for the rest of this year as it gets a complete revamp.

The Autumn Outing will be held at Dunblane New Golf Club on Thursday, September 4, when we have the tee from 1pm until 3pm. Entry forms will be emailed to those whose email address we have and they will be available to download from the website: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Alternatively, if anyone requires an entry form sent to them by post, please contact the Secretary. By not doing a standard mailshot the Section will be saving close to £100.

Gordon Moir



EAST

I start this month's report with the news that Ian Kinley currently working at The Glen Golf Club in North Berwick has been appointed Course Manager at Royal Porthcawl in Wales. He commenced his career at Royal Birkdale working under the guidance of Chris Whittle, before moving to The Old Course at St Andrews and then to Lahinch as Deputy in 2002. In June 2004 he was appointed Head Man at The Glen where he has made many improvements during the past four years.

On taking up his new position on July 14, he will have achieved a quadruple by working in all four home countries. I am sure everybody in the section will join me in wishing him every success in the future.

The big event in The Borders in May was held at The Macdonald Cardrona Hotel with the marriage of Jane Anderson from Innerleithen to Robert Hogarth the former Head Man at Cardrona who is now at Remedy Oaks in Dorset. Many well known faces from the world of Greenkeeping were in attendance and included Ian Macleod from Tain, Paul Murphy from Downfield and the current Course Manager at Cardrona Donald Campbell.

Around the Green

At the time of writing the happy couple are spending their honeymoon in Mexico. N.B. I understand from a good source that football was not a topic for discussion during the day!

The new Head Greenkeeper at Kingsfield Golf Centre near Linlithgow is Lee Fraser who has worked previously at both Linlithgow and Aberdour Golf Clubs under the guidance of David Roy and Mark Laing respectively. On the move to Kingsfield as First Assistant is former Toro Student Finalist, Barrie Lewis who is currently employed as an assistant at Ratho Park. There is currently major improvements being carried out at Kingsfield with a new 9 hole course under construction.

On a personal note, I now realise that the old saying "lady's are better at multi tasking than men" is probably true, if my recent efforts of gardening, cooking and housekeeping are anything to go by. Yes you've guessed, Roz is on holiday yet again!

Until Next Month

Mike Dooner



NORTH

Hi guys, hope you are all well. We are now getting into the full swing of the season and trying to keep the other 100's of greenkeepers at your respective clubs happy - namely the members. The weather has been great for the most part of May, very little rain in fact, what was I speaking about just a couple of months ago. What snow?

We, down at Murcar Links, are already starting to hand water certain areas of the course - I don't think we're the only ones.

There are a few snippets of news this month ranging from babies being born, to people getting themselves a new job, to the greenkeepers getting beaten in the annual trades' competition.

Firstly congratulations are winging their way to young Davie Merchant, from Murcar Links, and his fiancée Stacey, on the safe arrival of little, Aiden. Next she'll be wanting to name a date mate. Don't do it! I hear his regular trips to the local have come to an abrupt end. Just think of all the nappies that money will buy. Congratulations go to Alistair Mathieson on his success in becoming the new Course Manager at Cruden Bay. Alistair has moved down from Royal Dornoch, nearer to the big city and I hope that people will make him feel welcome.

What happened to the greenkeepers teams in the Trades' Competition at Hazelhead? Greenkeepers made it through to the third round where they were soundly beaten, sorry, beaten by the police. I think George must have been too busy thinking about all the five minute jobs he was preparing for the next day. Sadly two greenkeepers were beaten in the first round. Thanks lads as it has been a while since we have been able to put in two teams, so well done.

That's all for this month. If you have any news call me on: 07813889374.

Ben Brookes



NORTHERN REGION - NORTH EAST

Well what can we write about this month. I know what, I wonder how many golf clubs are spending lots of money on their course this year as we hear that golf clubs are all suffering with no waiting lists. Everyone seems to be trying to give the best deal for membership discounts here, there and everywhere but they still seem to find money for inside the club but one club here in the Section seem to be on the right track, Boldon Golf Club.

This year they have purchased quite a bit of new John Deere machinery. Not resting on their laurels they installed a full new irrigation system and furthermore they are investing in a verti-drain in October - now there's a club with ambition. I wish more clubs would do what Boldon have done, I hear it all the time they have no money but they still manage to find it somewhere and guess where its spent? You've guessed it, it's the clubhouse.

Rockcliffe Hall new staff appointments for the course are as follows: Pete Newton, previously at the Brabazon at the Belfry, is Head Greenkeeper; Jon Wyre, previously Forest of Arden, is First Assistant; both Gerry Glancy and James Bell, both who had worked at Slaley, and finally Adam McFarlane, fresh from doing HNC at Elmwood College, are all classed as Senior Greenkeepers. If anyone fancies working there they are still looking for one trainee this year.

Anyone who is looking forward to the John Deere Team Championship, this year hosted by Greenlay again, it will be played at Close House Golf and Country Club on July 17 - no doubt you will be notified in due course.

While I'm talking about this golf club if you have read Aprils issue of Golf North East you will notice that Course Manager Brian Clark had mentioned in the greenkeeper's diary column, laying 80 tonnes of tarmac on 13 new pathways - just think of all the manpower saved no weeding, no topping up and best of all nothing been washed away - my god somebody has got it right at last.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTH WEST

After a recent committee meeting it was decided that I would take over as North West Secretary. The job is very daunting but if I can do half as well as Bert did then I will be pleased. If you need any help or advice please contact me on: 0151 2894625 or you can email me at: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

By the time you read these notes The Open will be a few weeks away. Good luck to everyone at Birkdale, I am sure it will be a great Open and everyone will be praising the course and recognising all the hard work that goes into making The Open, in my opinion, the best golf tournament in the world.

Around the Green

Our next fixture in the Section is the Autumn Tournament which takes place at Davenport GC on September 4. Don't forget to put your name down as early as possible. I have recently spoke to Stuart Bridge who is making slow but good progress and he is hoping to come along to one of the fixtures and meet up with friends and colleagues.

Well that's all for now, if you have any news please don't hesitate to contact me.

Chris Sheehan



NORTHERN

As some of you will already know, former Northern Section Chairman, Andy Slingsby, has quit greenkeeping and resigned his position on the committee. Andy and his family have taken over as landlords of the Winterburn pub in Warley, on the outskirts of Halifax. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Andy and his family all the very best in their new careers, and thank him for all the hard work he has done for the Section.

April 30 was the date for this year's first golf day, and it was held at Filey Golf Club. A massive thank you and congratulations must go to Andy and his team, and everyone at Filey for producing such a fantastic course. The weather conditions in the run up to the day were horrendous, and the course was a credit to the hard work put in. Congratulations also to all the winners on the day, and a huge thank you to Sheriff Amenity for their sponsorship.

This year's match against the Sheffield Section will be held at Otley Golf Club on Wednesday, July 23. If anybody would like to play in the match and represent the Section then please get in touch as soon as possible.

I will finish off this month with a quick reminder that the 2008 Invitation Day will be held at Shipley Beckfoot Golf Club on Thursday, August 21 with the first tee off time at 1.30pm.

If anybody has any news they would like putting in the Section notes, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Adam Speight
Tel: 01274 638366
Mobile: 07739 319060



SHEFFIELD

On July 12 we held our Spring Tournament at Coxmoor Golf Club. I would like to thank the club for giving us courtesy of their course - it is much appreciated by us all. Thanks go to: Kevin Atherton for the excellent condition that Coxmoor was in, well done to Kevin and all his staff; Seymour Harris, from Pro Turf, for sponsoring the prize table - your continued support of the Section is very much appreciated, and last but not least to the catering staff who provided

us with a fantastic carvery which was enjoyed by us all!

The day was a fantastic day and there was some very good golf played on a great course which we had not played for over 14 years!

At the end of the days golf the eventual winner was Andy Unwin with 39pts well done Andy. Results: 1. A. Unwin, 39pts; 2. S. Currie, 37pts bb9; 3. S. Brown. 37pts.

Our next event is our Summer Tournament which is to be held at Grange Park Golf Club on July 7, after that, it will be us versus the Northern Section at Otley Golf Club on July 23.

I must also thank Peter Fell, from Aitkens, for producing the Section fixture list.

John Lax



NORTH WALES

July. Hopefully long hot days and warm balmy nights (hopefully!).

To start off with we have to thank Llanymynech Golf Club for their great hospitality, gorgeous course and lovely food at the Spring Tournament, their efforts where very much appreciated by all 53 players on the day.

The results are best gross Paul Roberts (with the aid of the A.A.), of Baron Hill, 70; 1. Andy Peel, Bull Bay GC, 39pts, also 70 gross; 2. Iwan Pugh, Eaton, GC, 36 pts; 3. Steve Roberts, Flint GC; 4. Johnny Evans, Carden Park; 5. Matt Lewis, Llanymynech GC.

Andy Peel and Paul Roberts, also as a result of their efforts, qualify for the BIGGA National Championship at East Sussex GC on October 8 this year, best of luck - I'm sure you'll do us proud!

On the day of the Spring Tournament a sand iron was found on the 17th hole. Anyone who lost it contact Andy Peel.

On June 10, the North Wales/North West took place at The Vale of Llangollen GC - full write up next month.

I know any greenkeepers from our Section who made it on to the Support Team for The Open at Royal Birkdale, will prove how professional and conscientious North Welsh greenkeepers are.

I'm sure you will all want to wish the family of Bert Cross our deepest sympathies after he passed away earlier this year.

I was asked to send sympathies for Derek Simpson, who worked for Fletcher Stewart, who also passed on earlier this year.

All the best until next month

Pete Maybury
Johnny Evans



MIDLAND REGION - EAST MIDLANDS

Just to remind everybody that this year's Summer Tournament takes place at Mickleover Golf Club, Derby, on Thursday, July 24. If you have not received an entry form please contact myself, Dan Rodgers.

Dan Rodgers, Secretary
07745227224
Shirland Golf Club
01773 834935
www.shirlandgolfclub.co.uk



MIDLAND

The annual BIGGA Midland Section's Match against the President's Team at Handsworth Golf Club was played on a lovely warm spring day – Tuesday, May 13. The teams this year have been reduced to 16 players/8 teams per side, and for once the Greenkeepers came out victorious winning five games to three.

As always the President's team were a joy to play and magnanimous in defeat. Congratulations to the 16 greenkeepers who took part and represented the Midland Section so admirably, as always. Thank you also to John Hughes and his team for the condition of the course during the busy spring growth period. By God, you can hear the grass growing!

For a number of years our old mate, Dave Gibbons, has served on committee and indeed represented the Section at regional level. However, due to a young family and work commitments, Dave has decided to step down from committee. I'm sure that you all shall join the committee in thanking him for his fine efforts while on committee. Cheers Rocky, and all the best mate.

I daren't ask Richard Beacham how many photos he has received for 2009's calendar! Come on now, get clicking, it's a lovely calendar; imagine the kudos and brownie points you will get from your Club if it is featured in such. Please send your photos to: rich71@btconnect.com This month's calendar page is kindly sponsored by our old friends Burrows Grass Machinery, our thanks to them.

And finally...thanks Billy for the picture, made me laugh mate. Imagine that on the calendar?

We all wish Andy Lane and Trevor Ward of Olton Golf Club speedy recoveries from their recent misfortunes. I'm sure you will both be back raking bunkers very soon. Something to look forward to!

Details of the forthcoming Pesticides Update Course and the latest Irrigation Masterclass Workshop are now available on the website.

For further details visit: www.biggamidlandsection.com or contact Paul Woodham on: 07880 734197 or: paul@ghgc.org.uk

Cheers until next month folks

Sean (the bard) McDade



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all.

Reading this will herald the arrival of July, half way through the year already. Where does it all go! July tends to be the busiest month with Club Championships, Captain's Days and Invitation Days all gracing the calendar.

Be careful what you wish for!

I began last month's column by saying hopefully everyone is out in the sunshine cutting grass. However it has been raining now all day and still doesn't look like stopping!

Last month I also wrote of the problems April brought with constant rainfall, someone must have listened because for the first three weeks of May we had a whole 2mm of rain. It dried the course out fantastically, however it went too far and began to dry out everything too much. This always leads to that fun time of year when the irrigation pumps and system have to hit the ground running. It doesn't matter how much you have checked the system and the pump beforehand there is no real way you can test eight hours of constant working. Last year my pump died on me, this year it decided to blow all its electrics, leaving me without water just when it was needed the most. Déjà vu!

However, spare a thought for Rob Welford, of Cleethorpes GC, who lost his entire irrigation control panel meaning he could not water automatically. Call it dedication or madness, but he decided the best way to go was to spend the entire night out on the golf course watering manually. Leaving a green on to water for half an hour he decided to visit Tesco at 4am, apparently it's an interesting experience.

If anyone else would like to share their early season problems with everyone else then let me know.

Our second golf day of the year was held at Burghley Park, on May 20. Family commitments again prevented my attendance, however a good turnout of nearly 30 players enjoyed fantastic greens and the best fairways some people had ever encountered.

The results were as follows: 1. Bruce Hicks, 39pts; 2. Brian Robinson, 36pts; 3. Graham MacDonald, 32pts; 4. Adi Kitchenon, 32pts; 5. Rob Welford, 31pts; Trade winner, Gary Cooper, 35pts; Nearest the Pin, Gavin Merrison; Longest Drive, Alan Walker (somehow!).

Many thanks go to the Burghley Park greenstaff for the condition of the

Around the Green

course, the bar and catering staff for looking after us so well and to Dave Smith, and Mansfield Sands, for sponsoring the day.

All the results and the latest Order of Merit standings can be found on our website.

Our next golf day is at Gainsborough on Tuesday, July 8, tee off is at 1pm and we are playing the Lakes course. Remember to arrive early for coffee and bacon rolls.

For any more information about this event or any others then contact Rob Welford at Cleethorpes GC.

www.eastofenglandbigga.com
steveimminham@aol.com

Many thanks

Steve Beverly



MID ANGLIA

The Spring Tournament was held at Bedfordshire Golf Club, on June 4, and was also the Qualifier for the National Championship to be held at the East Sussex National in October.

The weather did its best to put a dampener on the occasion and 18mm of rain overnight and 11mm the night before, along with heavy rain the previous week, had threatened to flood the greenkeepers sheds again. The clubhouse had been flooded the previous week and that is at the top of the hill! John and his team had had to move machinery out of the sheds in the middle of the night on several occasions, once at 3am, as a precautionary measure as the sheds are prone to flooding. Fortunately, if that is the right word, the water was only lapping at the shed doors this time.

A huge thank you to Bedfordshire Golf Club for hosting the event in such adverse conditions and an equally huge thank you to John and his team for their fantastic dedication to the job for even getting the course open, going far beyond what anybody could reasonably expect. Let's all hope the weather behaves and things can get back to normal. Thanks also to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day and to all the other trade members for their continued support.

1. Chris Garnett, Beds and County GC, 40 pts, also Longest Drive; 2. (on count back) M. Wood, Berkhamsted GC, 37 pts and also Nearest the Pin; 3. Steve Mason, Stocks GC, 37pts (on count back) and finally Clive Parnell scored 32pts to take the Trade Prize. First and second places go through to East Sussex National, good luck chaps. Clive, you're stopping at home.

Although it is some while ago now, congratulations to Mark Day and Geoff Fenn for running the London Marathon. Mark completed the course in 5hrs 57mins and raised over £1500 for his chosen charity Sense. Geoff finished in 3hrs 46mins and raised £1125 for the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home. Well done chaps, fantastic effort.

Welcome back to Matt Towler who rejoins the Section after a few years

away at Trent Park. Matt has taken over from James Camfield at Letchworth who in turn succeeds Jim Cassidy at Ashridge, good luck to you both in your new roles.

And finally, by the time you read this the US Open will have come and gone and focus will be on The Open, but here is a little teaser for you. The Head Greenkeeper at which golf club in the Section went on to win the US Open Championship and finish as runner up the following year? Well, you have to go back quite a way in the history books, as far as 1895, to Horace Rawlins who was once employed as both Professional and Head Greenkeeper at Mid-Herts Golf Club. After immigrating to the USA, Rawlins accepted a position as assistant professional at Newport Country Club, Rhode Island which hosted the inaugural US Open in 1895. Playing in just his third tournament, Rawlins was one of 11 participants invited to play and beat, among others, Willie Dunn by 2 strokes over 36 holes. If you're ever at Mid-Herts, there is a plaque on the Greenkeepers sheds commemorating his achievement.

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



SOUTH EAST REGION - SURREY

Friday, June 6. The rain has stopped and the weekend forecast has promised warm and dry so hopefully the Derby runners will not get wet. My tip is New Approach, so make sure you all have a few quid on it.

Looking over my many acres of garden, with the manor house behind me, I write next month's little epilogue with a contented heart knowing that the £5 worth of petrol in my car is just enough to get to the local pub. I'll walk home, then back in the morning with a full 5ltr can of distilled water and pray that what happened two millennia ago when water turned to wine, in my case, will be water into petroleum spirit. If not, it's the bicycle for me and goodbye to the combustion engine forever.

Mike Kirkham has much to be praised for as West Surrey Golf Club, the venue for the National Qualifier, was in magnificent condition and as always a pleasure to play. My playing partners, Tony Bremer and Adie Locke, for whom I have always had a deep regard, were rubbish and the least said about our ball the better.

Best Gross: 1. Kevin Boxall; 2. Jason Hunt; 3. Greta Ogilvie. Best Nett: 1. Darren Woodward; 2. Eddy Oliver. Nearest the Pin: James Lowe. Longest Drive: Tony Brennan.

Surrey Section will host a Health and Safety day at Foxhills Golf Club on October 27. Other Sections are invited together with club officials. For further details contact Mystic Meg or Ron Christie.

Congratulations to Anna Farley who gave birth to her daughter, Freya Lif, 7lbs 7ozs on April 17. Darren Farley, Deputy at the RAC Golf Club, wants his wife to know that he will move back as soon as Freya starts school.

Also wandering what has hit him is John Budd, Course Manager at Effingham



GC, for his wife, Helen, presented him with his firstborn, a son, Samuel Jack, 6lbs 7ozs on April 13, coincidentally the birth date of my eldest daughter. I've heard rumours that Samuel Jack has already packed his belongings into a large spotted handkerchief and will leave home if his dad persists in grinning madly at him and making burbling noises with his fingers and lips.

I must now confess to a severe attack of memory fatigue for I have been unable to remember who is the father of James Owen, the 9lb 1oz son of Jemma, born on March 15. Daddy please let me know who you are so that I can make amends next month and give little James his father back.

And so to football, sponsored by John Shaw Machinery, played at East Grinstead Sports Ground and featuring some 25-a-side teams from the South East area, who played in wet conditions on May 28. I fear I was not present so the following report is from a player I seconded and after much editing to remove very slanderous and highly contentious remarks "Ronaldo", my reporter's non de plume's communiqué, is as follows.

The tournaments favourite, the team with the very loud player/manager/coach did not even get past the group stages. Although the young Liphook team had much enthusiasm it was not matched by their durability for the most the Addington Palace keeper had to do was chat to Dave Murdoch, the afore mentioned player/manager/coach, who was on the bench that first game having put out his strongest team. Hard luck Liphook for coming up against a team of very older but wiser players.

Hindhead, another strong team, were beaten in the semi final but it was Addington Palace against Sunningdale in the final. Congratulations to Sunningdale for holding out for a 0-0 draw at full time but to the Addington Palace player who missed his penalty and lost the game, is a months strimming not a just reward? Well done Sunningdale.

John Humphries is retiring from Shanks Mowers of Thornton Heath, and he was only 81 in April.

Brian Willmott
brian.willmott@hotmail



KENT

At last some sunshine to bless our courses! And the ubiquitous smart comment from a member telling us about how great it must be to be a greenkeeper as we're always out in the sunshine. He's obviously forgotten about the horrendous conditions we have had to contend with until very recently yet still produced a fine course for him and his ilk.

The warmer weather has certainly brought the golfers back out at Birchwood and, judging by their gleaming armoury in gleaming new bags, many of them have used the money they saved by not playing golf in the poor weather to invest in the latest clubs and accessories to improve their games. Golfers sure are suckers for new gear!

We've all been there though, buying new irons, drivers, putters and god knows what else thinking it will make us into something approaching semi-pro standard only for us to play half a dozen poor holes before the realisation

kicks in that the problem wasn't with the head of the club but, rather, what stands at the other end of it!

Who cares! As long as the company's right and the weather is half decent then surely the game itself is a mere bit part player in the full enjoyment of a few hours spent with friends admiring the skills of our colleagues in the great English countryside.

It's not a bad old life after all!

Congratulations to my old mate Dan Waghorn, from The London Club, and his far better half, Kimberley, on the birth of their first child at the start of June. At least you'll have a decent excuse for being late for work now mate!

The next event in your Kent Section year is the trip to Canterbury Golf Club on the July 10 (as shown on our calendar). Entry forms are available on the website as is all up to date information and past results.

Enjoy the summer while it lasts guys.

Best of British

Rob Holland



ESSEX

Things are moving fast and furious at the moment and grass leads the way, though it's quickly followed by the events in the Section.

Our spring event has past and by the time you read this so will the summer event. Entry forms are available for download from the website, it helps if you would print this off in the future, then let us know, so we can remove you from the mailing list. I feel this is the most economical way of sending out the entry forms. The rising cost of postage and the time and manpower to get them sent out, make forever-increasing pressure on the modern day Course Manager.

Upminster did us proud! The welcome on arrival, the course and the evening meal were all memorable. Dougie (Ferne) and his team had worked hard to get the course into pristine condition and then the heavens opened. I can just imagine what Dougie was saying and feeling early that morning. The course stood up to it well though and to be fair it was more a continued heavy drizzle than a full onslaught. All those that played in the damp conditions enjoyed their day's golf. The meal in the evening was a delight and although I missed it, reports of the evening were that it rounded the day with a flourish.

Thanks to all the trade who put prizes on the raffle table, and to this year's joint sponsors of the Section. Our thanks also go to the members, committee and staff of Upminster Golf Club, for the use of their course. To the reception we received from all and to Dougie and his team for arranging a really good test of golf.

Results of our first event of the season, Spring Stableford at Upminster Golf Club: Overall: Richard Linin, 38pts, Upminster Golf Club; 1.1 Adam Millward, Orsett Golf Club, 35pts; 2.1 Daniel Hughes, Forrester Park Golf & TC, 35pts; 3.1 Roland Hughes, Forrester Park Golf & TC, 34pts; 1.2 Dougie Fernie, Upminster

Around the Green

Golf Club, 34pts; 2.2 Ben Scrivener, Benton Hall Golf Club, 32pts; 3.2 Sam Cook, Colchester Golf Club, 30pts; Guest: Kevin Royan, 39pts; Trade: Mark Keysell, Rigby Taylor Ltd, 36pts; Longest Drive: Mark Keysell, Rigby Taylor; Nearest the Pin: Simon Barber, Benton Hall Golf Club. 43 played.

Long standing Essex member Alan Sharp, has spent the last two and a half years working on the wilds of the Scottish coastline at Open qualifying course, Scotsraig.

He now returns to Essex to take on the role of Course Manager at The Club Company's, Benton Hall Golf Club.

Course Manager at Chigwell Golf Club some years ago before spending a short period of time abroad, he returned to the UK and took up the position of Course Manager at Scotsraig. But now he has made his return to Essex. Alan will head a team of greenkeepers who have been at the club for a number of years. The Essex Section, wish him well in his new position and hopefully we will see him back at our golf days in the near future, after he has settled into his new position.

Banks Amenity Products Director, Simon Banks, along with his wife, Caroline, have just announced a new arrival to the family. Baby, Thomas, was born on Tuesday, May 6; he joins his sister in the Banks household. Well done, Caroline with a little help from Simon.

The second new arrival in the Essex Section is a second daughter to Richard (Tonto) Lewis, Blade Amenity, and his partner, Alex. Grace was born on Tuesday, May 20 weighing in at 6lbs 13ozs. She joins her sister, Honey, in the Lewis house. Well done, Alex.

It appears the only greenkeeper from our Section to join the BMW support team at Wentworth, was Andy Cracknell, Orsett GC. Well done Andy for your continued support of the event.

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

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer www.essexbigga.co.uk
essesbigga@talktalk.net 07764862337



SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH WALES REGION **- SOUTH WEST**

Writing this after yet another wild and wet May Bank Holiday Weekend with play and revenues well down. I was in for the "Dawn Chorus" on the Monday - a shotgun-start off 18 tees at 6.30am. Lovely - I did enjoy the 4.30am start to get the course ready. At least it hadn't started raining at that point, but it soon made up for it with gale force winds to boot.

Back at home - a nice breakfast was followed by an enjoyable but all too brief re-acquaintance with my bed before being summarily dragged off to look for hanging baskets at local garden centres. At one point, we were held up in a giant queue - which turned out to be spectators for the local "Cheese-

rolling" event. We found out later that 3000 people had turned out in the pouring rain - many walking several miles to spectate as around 60 madmen hurled themselves down Coopers Hill, just outside Gloucester, in pursuit of the cheeses. The local TV replays showed that cheese rollers can generally be considered complete lunatics, given the right circumstances, with some 19 competitors carted off to hospital on spinal boards. Several competitors and spectators had come from as far a field as Brazil, and incredibly, Japan. Some people will do anything for a slice of Double-Gloucester.

At Minch - we've "got the builders in". An ancient tin clad asbestos-roofed barn is being demolished to make way for a brand new storage facility for dry top-dressing, sand, chemicals, and machinery. To be as environmentally responsible as possible we set up metal recycling, asbestos sheets to go intact to a specialist contractor, concrete blocks to be crushed into ballast, and a little soil and old fertiliser into a large top-soil and compost stack. However, no sooner than we'd started knocking it down with a huge slew (how do they unerringly find the telephone cable with the first bucket?) than a member of the public pitched up on the nearby footpath and started berating anyone who'd listen. "That's a scandal" he screamed - "that barn's perfectly good, and you're just wantonly destroying it". Before anyone could answer he raved on - "you could've offered that to a poor Welsh farmer". By now the lads were sniggering in the background and he stormed off towards the clubhouse determined to cause trouble. As I looked up at the colander-like golf-ball holed asbestos roof, the rusting stanchions, and the dented tin cladding, I couldn't help musing that if many of these were inflicted on the Principality, most of the population would quickly decide that complete Devolution from the lousy English probably wasn't such a bad idea after all.

News from Cannington College;

Newly appointed trainer/assessor, Jake Waites, with 15 years experience in the greenkeeping sector at Goodwood Park, St. Pierre and the Celtic Manor, is now available to offer training in the workplace. This work based training and assessment will allow candidates to achieve NVQ awards with virtually no time away from the workplace and at a time scale to suit both them and the employer. While traditional methods of training (day release) are still available at Cannington, this new scheme may better suit the needs of some greenkeepers and their employers. The college continues to offer NVQ level 3 and full and part time courses at FE and HE level. Government funding is available for most awards especially NVQ level 2 which may be free to the employer through the "Train to Gain" initiative. So if you're an employee or an employer who has no previous NVQ qualification aged 18-64, contact Steve Hasell or Jake at Cannington on 01278 655144 as you may be eligible for a nationally recognised qualification at minimal cost.

Recently, I bumped into an old friend of mine - Trevor Hint - who was Captain at a nearby local golf club last year. He was telling me about how he put a lot of thought into his Captain's Day, and how he wanted to do something "a little different" during the evening party. Well he certainly managed that all right. Having a reputation of something of a hot-head - he came up with the brilliant idea of club-throwing competitions. To start with it was nearest the pin - into a soft bank, and that went well. Then came the longest throw. This started off in good humour, but rapidly developed into an alcohol and testosterone-fuelled war. Eventually, adopting the style made famous by female Russian Hammer-throwers and the like, and straining so hard that he nearly ground all the enamel off his teeth, Trev completely miss-timed the point of release, with the result that the club unexpectedly flew off at left angles and cart-wheeled end-over-end down a row of parked cars in the nearby car park. It broke four windscreens, and did £500's worth



of damage to the bonnet of a Mercedes before coming to rest. Nice idea Trev – talk your way out of that one! Oddly enough – the Merc was written off in the floods a few days later, so no one ever charged him for repairs. I suppose it's an ill wind.

Finally, there have been one or two thefts of red diesel in our area recently. This fuel which has always been traditionally cheap is now so expensive that it is highly attractive to criminals. At a club near to us, a four-wheel drive was actually used to push over a boundary stone wall to gain access to the course. It was reported to be fitted with a large tank in the rear probably with its' own electric pump. Diesel tanks are traditionally poorly protected with only flimsy locks. It's time to revise security. You have been warned!

Paul Worster
07768 394593
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



SOUTH COAST

As I put these words together, the weather is glorious and England has just beaten New Zealand in the Test Match at Trent Bridge. Happy days! By the time you read this who knows what the weather will be like and the consistence of the England Cricket Team - anyway on to imminent fixtures. The Summer Tournament will be held at Burley Golf Club on Thursday, July 10. If you've not booked already please contact our Tournament Organiser Kevan Glass at the following address: Apartment 1, Forge Side Court, Lepe Road, Langley, Southampton SO45 1SS mobile: 07859 053054 or email: glassy2003@hotmail.com.

The annual match between our Section and the Wessex Secretaries was held at Brockenhurst Golf Club on Wednesday, June 4. A very enjoyable day was had by all. The result was a 3:2 for the Secretaries. Congratulations to their Team. This year's match was the 12th year and the Secretaries win means it is now six wins for each team. To add to this excitement there is one engraved position left on the cup so one would think the winner of next year's match will keep the silverware. Many thanks to the sponsors, Course Care, and a huge thank you to the courtesy of Brockenhurst GC. The course was in excellent condition and we would like to thank Ed McCabe and his Team for the presentation and preparation of the Golf Course. Well done all!

Chris Bitten and I have been doing a bit of work in the background on the educational seminar for next year and things are going well. It goes without saying that if you have any ideas for subjects or speakers for future seminars or any news or information for Around The Green, especially with exam results for students etc coming up in the summer, then please let me know on the number below.

Ok that's that for this month. I'm now off to watch the football (not Big Brother). See you soon or speak to you next month.

Joe Crawley
Mobile: 0781 684 9942
Email: joe.crawley@vitax.co.uk

BIGGA's Regional Administrators



Peter Boyd
SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440
Mobile: 07776 242120



Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
Tel: 01476 550115
Mobile: 07866 366966



Clive Osgood
SOUTH EAST
Tel: 01737 819343
Mobile: 07841 948410



Jane Jones
SOUTH WEST & WALES
Tel: 01454 270850
Mobile: 07841 948110

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

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