



## News from the Chief Executive

It is Sunday morning and the sun streams through the window of the waiting lounge in Brussels airport where I eagerly await the 'plane to take me home, a much nicer day than the one that greeted me on Thursday.

For the past three days I have been networking with our European colleagues who have all come together to represent their countries at the annual FEGGA Conference. Just like at Harrogate there is a great camaraderie between delegates, despite cultural and language differences, and it's not long in any gathering before the talk turns to greenkeeping and golf club life. The conference delegates were presented with an excellent education programme including talks from Golf Environment Europe, the R&A, Frank Newberry and the key sponsors.

The main theme revolved around environmental issues and of particular personal interest was a presentation on the workings of the European Parliament that explained very clearly the process through which legislation is created and the recent draft paper on pesticides was used as an illustration. There is little doubt in my mind that tighter legislation is just around the corner and while I do not envisage a ban on chemicals I do think that eventually there will be much stricter control over the purchase and use of such products, including the domestic consumer. Upon closer inspection however it is clear that the UK leads the way in control and use of such products however we cannot afford to relax the pressure on Brussels through participation in such groups as the Amenity Forum.

With the sun in mind I am conscious of a recent meeting with representatives of the Karen Clifford Skin Cancer Charity that has been established to raise the awareness of the risks of over exposure to UV leading to skin cancer. It seems that the incidence of this illness is on the increase and it is only a question of time before the courts try test cases against employers who have a duty of care under health and safety legislation. If you wish to learn more then visit [www.skcin.org](http://www.skcin.org) and more on this will be featured in coming issues of Greenkeeper International and the BIGGA website.

At BIGGA HOUSE we seem to be getting more calls or e-mails than usual from golfers regarding the policy of course closure due to adverse conditions. We treat these with extreme care and usually suggest that the enquirer communicates better with the greenkeeping staff at his or her club. Any members needing help should not hesitate to contact a member of staff here at Aldwark and please remember that the Legal Helpline facility covers Health and Safety advice as well as a myriad of other legislation. I can confirm that the service is completely free and members should contact their Regional Administer if they feel that a face-to-face friendly chat with someone would help.

There is no need to feel isolated when help could be provided, usually all for the cost of a 'phone call. After all that's part of why people join associations such as ours.

**John Pemberton**



### SCOTTISH REGION – AYRSHIRE

Hello to you all, hope you're in good health and have managed to get some winter renovation and maintenance work done in between the horrendously wet and windy weather we've been bearing the brunt of!

The date for the Spring Outing to be played over the Portland Course at Troon has been confirmed and will be Tuesday April 15. Derek will be sending out the invites so be sure to get them in promptly as I'm sure places will be in high demand. Remember the outing also serves as the first leg of the Daval-sponsored Harry Diamond Memorial Jug.

I was fortunate enough to get down to Harrogate for a few days and thoroughly enjoyed it! No, not just to get a break from a mundane home life or to escape the horrendously wet and... (you get the picture), well ok maybe a wee bit of that! but mainly because it was great to see old friends and hopefully made new ones. It gives you the opportunity to find out the hot topics in the profession and to take in seminars that are of interest to you.

I had a beer or two with Kerr Rowan and Ian Smith, a couple of local lads selected for the Bernhard-sponsored trip to the GCSAA show in Orlando, so I'm sure they will of had a good time of it over there.

In closing I would just like to wish my pal and ex Turnberry workmate Brian Aitken all the best as he embarks on a new challenge with his lawn care business.

*Denis Twedell*

07939 104701 [denis.t@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:denis.t@hotmail.co.uk)



### CENTRAL

Harrogate week seems like a long time ago now but it was a good week by all accounts. I was unfortunately unable to attend this year but those I spoke to certainly got a lot from it. The Section pass on our (belated) congratulations to Walter Woods on receiving his Lifetime Achievement Award, which was very much deserved. I often bump into Walter when he is out practising on the courses at St Andrews and he never mentioned it, which is typical of his self-deprecating style.

The season will soon be upon us and hopefully the weather will have improved from the time I'm writing this. The Section are still hoping to arrange a visit to the Barenbrug mixing plant at Falkirk followed by a presentation before the end of March. Details of the date and directions to the Warehouse will be posted on the website, [www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk) as soon as they become available so keep a look out for that.

Also, your committee will be considering whether to stage a social function some evening as has been suggested on the website, clay pigeon shooting, go karting or similar. Again, log onto the website and go to the new forum page to give us your suggestions on that or any other items that interest you. The forum on the website has been very

# Around the Green

well received and there is now a chat room section which has started up every Sunday evening at 8pm. Member you have to register in the first instance when you log in to allow to access to the form.

Hopefully we will see you at the Spring Outing at Lundin Links on April 24, if not before. We only have 20 times available to us from 11.32 until 2.04 so a speedy return of your entry forms once you get them is recommended. Lundin Links is a great course and Billy Swann and his team have consistently done a really good job there over the years.

Congratulations to Craig Wilson, the man mountain who works at St Andrews Links, who has been selected for the Scottish under 20 Rugby squad and to the Leven Links team who trounced their "Royal" Scoonie opponents at their annual games night.

Finally, we all wish a speedy recovery to Andy O Hara, Jim Finlayson and George McDonald who have all been seriously ill recently.

*Gordon Moir*



## EAST

Our apologies. Due to a mix up at BIGGA HQ, last month's East Section notes were not printed. They have been added to this month's text.

I start this month's report on a sad note with the news that Shaun Hardy, Head Greenkeeper at Magdalene Fields in Berwick was killed on Thursday, 17th January 2008. Two suspects are currently being held in police custody on manslaughter charges. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this time.

The dates for 2008 are as follows: Spring Outing – 1st April, Gullane No.2 at 1pm; Autumn outing – 9th September, Kingsknowe at 1pm; Willie Woods Tournament – 9th October, West Linton at 1pm; AGM – 30th October, Dundas Park.

The Willie Woods Tournament this year is being sponsored by Scotts, therefore a big thank you in advance is due to them and to our sponsor in previous years, Golf Finance, who are based in North Berwick.

The Section is currently organising an educational trip to the Renaissance Club, in East Lothian. The date and time will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Finally the long overdue questionnaire based on ways to improve the Section is due out shortly. Please do not file it in the bin, complete and return it in the stamped addressed enveloped provided.

The Scottish winner of the BIGGA 2007 Environment Award is West Linton Golf Club. The club, that previously received a Highly Commended award from this competition, was delighted to receive the award for Scotland. Good environmental practices are well established on the course and in the clubhouse, and the club intends to develop and promote the key features of its stunning location. Working with local schools, organisations and agencies the club is keen to show off its environmental strengths and their importance to the game of golf in West Linton.

The Head Greenkeeper at Swanston Golf Club, John Gallagher, has recently had a partial Hip Replacement. On behalf of the committee, I would like to wish John a speedy return to full fitness.

On the trade front Robert T Bruce retired at the end of 2007. Although in the main he lived and worked in the West of Scotland, he was well known throughout Scotland and the North of England. I for one will miss his smile and tremendous wit!

On a personal note, Roz and I spent New Year in Crete. The good weather and the absence of tourists made the hassle of three flights out and three flights back worth the effort!

Until next month

*Mike Dooner*



## NORTH

How is everybody this month? Hopefully March will bring some decent weather for us to get the courses up and running.

The two outings this year will be at Craibstone in the Spring and Kirriemuir in the Autumn. The Spring outing is slightly earlier this year on April 24. Hopefully this will allow more of our members to come along and support the section before they get too busy on their respective golf courses. The 200 Club will be coming out soon and this is our best means of income so let's support it and buy as many tickets as possible. Bob Hardie is the man to see for tickets if you don't already have one or you know of somebody that is looking for one. Bob's number is 07841-993772 for information regarding the 200 club.

Congratulations are due to Neil Bruce, at Montrose GC, on his appointment as Course Manager. There was a strong entry for this job so well done to Neil in coming out on top, I'm sure he will relish the chance to put his own stamp on the course over the next few years.

William Mackenzie, who was First Assistant at Fortrose GC, has left to take up the post of Head Greenkeeper at Ulapool GC. Good luck to him in his new post. Graham Gordon, who is the Deputy Head at Oldmeldrum GC, has become a father for the 1st time with a baby daughter arriving in late January. Rebecca is doing well and keeping her father awake till the early hours. Enjoy fatherhood Graham, grey hairs will follow soon.

Not much more from me this month so here's hoping for a good spring weather wise to kick-start some growth.

*Robert Patterson Royal Aberdeen GC*



## NORTHERN – NORTH EAST

Will they or won't they, the Messiahs have returned (yes it's plural) firstly King Kev has returned to Newcastle Utd, and secondly Steve Cram, formerly of Slaley Hall, has returned back to Slaley, after being in charge of Close House for the past couple of years, just in time for an

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important professional Seniors' Competition coming up in August this year. Good luck, Steve, hope to meet you sometime this year.

With Steve moving, Brian Clark who was his second in command at Close House has been promoted to Course Manager and is looking forward to having his own course to look after.

News from a couple of courses in our Section, Longhirst Hall have got the Junior County Championship and the local newspaper the Evening Chronicle Sunshine Fund Golf Day this year. Not bad going for the time the course has been going - this represents a major step forward for them for the hard work done over the years to host such events. Those of you who know Graham Chambers know he is now officially Golf Manager, looking after the business as a whole, including the courses, overseeing the clubhouse operation and most of the Club Secretary duties. Fortunately he has Stu Wilson and Stephen Smith doing a great job of overseeing the daily tasks on the courses - this is all part of the growth process which is ongoing as always.

Talking to Head Greenkeeper Tommy Harrison from Gosforth GC (Bridal Path) the other day and he was saying that this season they spending quite a bit of money on new machinery, buying a rough cutter, fairway and tees cutter, but what's different is that he's not buying all the same make - now that doesn't happen very often these days.

Section Competitions have been confirmed. This year we are going to Dunstanborough Castle in the Spring (Wednesday, April 16) we are trying different days this year maybe we will get more people playing as figures have dropped severely. The Autumn Competition is at Burgham Park, this is the first time we have played there and that's on October 8.

If you play at Dunstanborough Castle in April perhaps you could take time out for looking at the reconstruction of greenkeepers shed from the 1900s, in the same style and dimensions as the original but with extended eaves to provide nesting space for birds. If you read your December magazine you would see that they received the 2007 innovation title for restoration work been done on various parts of their course.

And finally, once again we have Terry Charlton to thank for providing transport - much appreciated from the North East Section. A little mention should not go unnoticed about Steve Pope, I think broke his own record by collecting about 26 pens and most likely some wooly hats as well - the Section committee will set you a target for next year Steve.

*Jimmy Richardson*



## NORTHERN

A date has finally been set for the Spring Seminar. It will be taking place on Thursday, 13 March at the De Vere Oulton Hall Hotel and Golf Complex, Leeds. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of both Bernhard and Company and Rigby Taylor, this is a free seminar, open to all members of BIGGA Northern Section, and we have three of the best speakers around - Martyn Jones, Stephen Bernhard and the Northern Section's own Jim Brown.

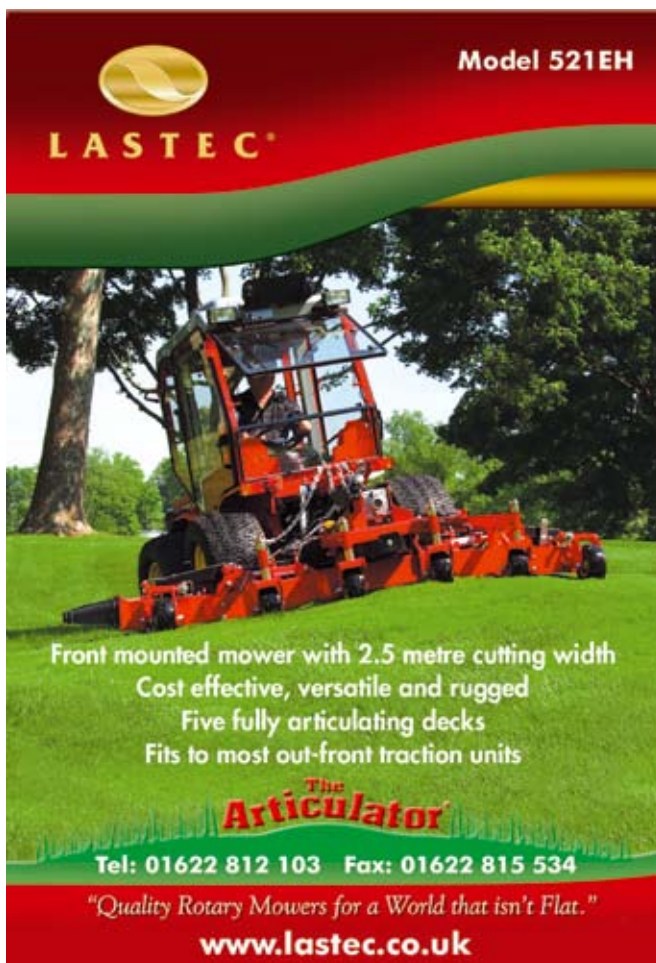
The day will start at around 9.15am with bacon rolls and coffee, followed by Martyn Jones' talk, entitled "Sustainable Golf Or Not?" Stephen Bernhard will take over at 11am for his talk "Stay Sharp, Run Fast". A free buffet lunch will follow, before Oulton Hall's Golf and Estates Manager Jim Brown speaks on "The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Oulton Hall".

This seminar is strictly limited to 50 places, so please book early to avoid disappointment. Anyone wishing to attend please get in touch with me on 07739 319060 as soon as possible.

Another important date for your diaries is Wednesday, 30 April, which is the confirmed date for the Spring Tournament, to be held at Filey Golf Club. First tee off is at 12.15, and bacon rolls and coffee will be available from around 11.30. For future events all names AND payment must be received at least seven days prior to the event. If payment is not received prior to the day then unfortunately places will be cancelled. If you have any difficulties with this please get in touch and we can come to an agreement.

Next month I will bring you the dates of the remainder of 2008s golf events.

*Adam Speight 07739 319060*



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## CLEVELAND

Sorry about the lack of notes recently but there was a mix up between HQ and myself on two separate occasions.

Well, another successful Harrogate Week has come and gone and I feel I should congratulate all the organisers and thank all of the trade supporters too. Although the merger talks between BIGGA and the IOG have been halted for the moment, the 'big shows' are one area where the 'Industry' can support each other. Can I urge all greenkeepers and groundsman to work together even if the circumstances are less formal than we hoped for?

Our Section members are invited to enter the 2008 Annual Turfcare Darts Championships. The Southern qualifier has been provisional booked for Castle Eden Cricket Club at 7pm on Thursday, March 20. The first prize is £100 with the runner up receiving £50 and semi finalists £25 each. Please ring Karen on 01207 505837 for further details and booking your place in the draw.

Our Spring Outing is planned for Tuesday, April 15 at Blackwell Grange Golf Club, Darlington. Tee off times are 9.30 – 10.30am. Please book with Pembo as numbers are limited 07989 508878. It will be nice to play Blackwell again after a good few years!

We were represented by several members of the branch at the Turfcare quiz at Mount Oswald in December.

The greenkeepers team was triumphant this year and Barry Walker received the trophy on behalf of the Greenkeepers. Well done, lads and lasses.

Finally the first 'Bring a Bottle' tournament was held at Cleveland Golf Club on a beautiful day in December. This team Stableford event was won by a quartet of Ian Pemberton (Cleveland GC), Dave Hatfield (Cleveland GC Greens Chairman), Phil Hargrave (South Shields GC) and Anthony 'Titch' McGeough (Richmond GC). Their total of 118 points was enough to win easily.

I think local knowledge may have played some part in their victory. The longest drive was won by Martin McCririck of South Shields and Pembo was the 'Nearest the Pin' winner. May I compliment Ian and his staff for the condition of the course – the greens were superb! Thanks must also go to Cleveland Golf Club for the courtesy of the course and the superb meal.

The event was sponsored by Tacit and it was great to see their area manager Peter Marshall walking the course with the lads. Fortunately the Section Chairman, Tony Smith, did not attend, so no one had their ears bent over a full 18-hole walk. However he sent an able deputy in George Malcolm who spent the whole round telling his team how good looking he still is, even though in reality he's really an ugly old git! Just joking boys!

Terry 'El Prez' Charlton 07831 214879



## SHEFFIELD

Once again not a lot of news this month, just to let everyone know that our new Section Secretary is James Stevens and anyone wishing to contact him at anytime with regard to any matter may feel free to do so on: 077388719614 or: [jimmy\\_jams20@hotmail.com](mailto:jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com)

We have got a lecture planned for March 12 at Rotherham Golf Club which will be sponsored by Rigby Taylor and the lecture will be given by Bernhards and Martyn Jones details of this you should of received in the post if you have not please feel free to contact James or myself.

As regards to the trip to Wembley we hope to try to re-arrange it at some later date we will keep you informed of this as we finalise the details. Anyone with any news please feel free to contact me on 07793111845 or on my new email: [jvl1967@sky.com](mailto:jvl1967@sky.com)

John Lax



## NORTH WALES

Here we go, March already and as the old adage goes, in like a lion out like a lamb (well we can only hope!).

It's around this time our minds turn to spring renovation and all the humbug it brings, will the aerators work properly? Will the top dresser spread properly? Will the dressing suppliers not put their prices up two hours before you put your order in? And finally will the weather actually be nice and allow you to get the dressing in before it rains! Fingers crossed eh!

The spring seminar will be held at Abergele golf club (LL22 8DS) postcode in case you're using sat nav to find your way there.

The main subject is the new downloadable Safety Management System, a holistic approach to health and safety not only covering the course but the clubhouse areas as well.

The agenda is SMS download and use, an SMS in use and the importance of it in the health and safety environment. This information will be very handy to have in today's blame and claim culture.

The Spring Competition will be held at Llanymynech Golf Club (SY10 8LB) on May 14 entry forms for all of this years competitions should be with you now. Any enquiries to Jeremy Hughes or Carl Crocher, who I'm sure will have all the answers for you.

We're a bit short on local news this month but anyone who was at Harrogate, would have seen a very proud father and son team, these being Brian and Darren Anderson as Darren was officially presented with his Master Greenkeeper plaque. We would like to increase the local news aspect of our column, so please get in touch with your local news, anything that you might want to share with the Section - Marriages, Births, promotions, Retirements. This might be your only

# Around the Green

chance to see your name or your club's name in print in a national publication.

Peter Maybury [petemayb66@aol.com](mailto:petemayb66@aol.com)  
Johnny Evans [Johnny.evans@tesco.net](mailto:Johnny.evans@tesco.net)



## MIDLAND REGION

### Training and Education

There was something for everyone at Harrogate this year with a comprehensive programme of education. Congratulations to all at BIGGA and especially Sami and Rachael. I was one of the many candidates for the STRI presentation of The Disturbance Theory. The seminar was not only interesting and entertaining but delivered some food for thought. There is the possibility of hosting this seminar in the Midlands if there is sufficient interest. As ever you can contact me to discuss your training and education requirements and it would be nice to find some new venues for the autumn so please let me know if your club would be willing to host an event. We have lots of ideas for future events and topics with an Irrigation Electricians Workshop and Pesticide Update and Refresher Training amongst the first to be staged.

Please note that the date for the Midland Section Spring Tournament has been changed to Thursday, 24 April.

Paul Woodham



## MIDLAND

Well, as we are all too aware, and for some to their embarrassment, security against theft in and around the sheds is now of huge importance. What with motion sensors, laser beams, circuit breakers, mess rooms which resemble a jail, and the call at one in the morning from the alarm company only to find that a spider has tripped the alarm. However the Wrekin greenkeepers have an additional security system called Rebel, the Dobermann Pinscher, whose father is Karl Lans. Does anyone else have an unusual security system?

Now our Spring Tournament is to be held at Kidderminster GC; however the Club has double booked the published (21/04/08) date as on the fixture card and entry form. The new date is Thursday, 24 April. Don't forget you can download an entry form from our web site, just click on the Golf link. You can still use the posted entry form, but please could you please put a line through the date and put the 24/04/08 so as Gary knows that you have entered the correct day. For this year's first three Tournaments the cost of entry has been reduced down to £20 each, it is hoped that such shall encourage more of you to attend these great days.

Don't forget to get your Scotts Doubles entry in before the Spring Tournament, as the draw shall be carried out there. Now if you are thinking that the same old faces always win why enter? The dynamic duo that is Paul and Ed have been cut two shots each in this event for this year, so come on support this long running great event.

Now I must admit that our website is growing from strength to strength in both its content and presentation. Leigh has posted some very interesting STRI articles in the News & Reports link, check them out they are worth reading. Our thanks to the many sponsors of the website which of course can be found on such.

Finally, our thanks to North Staffs Irrigation for this month's calendar page. If we have a summer like last year we shall all need a reliable system for sure, they can be found at [www.northstaffsirrigation.co.uk](http://www.northstaffsirrigation.co.uk)

Sean McDade



## EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello again. Hopefully everyone returned home from Harrogate Week in one piece and the hangovers have now diminished. A good complement of East of England Section members were present for some part of the show and a full committee was able to meet on the Wednesday (some more in body than in mind!). It was also good to catch up with old friends again.

The show seemed like a big success and congratulations should go to all involved with work in producing the stands and the education programme for the week. I certainly learned a few things so my green committee had better watch out!

I was a bit dubious about returning to work on the Thursday after getting a picture sent to me from one of my staff showing the golf course a foot deep in water again (not quite deep enough to row a boat though!). However I am pleased to say that my attempts at drainage work have paid off and the holes are dry and open for now.

Congratulations go to Allan Walker on his last minute call up for the Bernhard Delegation to the GCSAA Golf Show in Orlando. As a previous delegate to the Orlando show I know that you will have a great time, it is an amazing show and the Bernhards crew take good care of you. Work hard and play hard, that is the advice I can give you. By the time you read this he will have returned and I am sure that he will have many stories to tell!

By the time you read this we will have had our final winter seminar, due to be held on February 27 at Elisham Golf Club. It is going to be presented by the STRI on the Disturbance Theory and should be very interesting to all those who attend. A full report will be here next time.

A quick reminder that our first golf day of 2008 is going to be held on April 16 at Pottergate Golf Club, Lincoln. A full fixture list should have arrived with the letter sent out about the seminar.

All Section members are reminded to make full use of our website:  
[www.eastofenglandbigga.com](http://www.eastofenglandbigga.com)

Anyone with any news to be mentioned on this page please contact me  
[Steveimmingham@aol.com](mailto:Steveimmingham@aol.com)

Steve Beverly Immingham Golf Club



## BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

Players' don't get relief from divots in fairways or footprints in bunkers. Why should they get relief from spike marks on greens?  
Jeff Hall (USGA Spokesperson)

The BBO pigeon carrier service has been quite with little news to report over the three counties.

The much coveted ball and chain awaits Alistair Higgs from Blue Mountain GC who after having his arm twisted, with a night passion in his wagon (Cushman vehicle) has decided to tie the knot after proposing to Aimee his fiancée. Congratulations to you both.

Steve Chandler from Goring & Streatley GC had a blond moment and has recently consulted a Follicle Replacement Therapist and now on Sunday's can be seen batting with Graham Gooch, something must have gone to his head, Claire his fiancée of 15 years has accepted his proposal of marriage, Congratulations Steve, remember the pitter patter of tiny feet are just around the corner.

The Spring National Qualifier has been confirmed and this year will be held at Chiltern Forrest GC on Wednesday, April 23, also the Summer Tournament will be at Lambourn GC on the 17th July entry forms will be sent out early and can also be downloaded from the section website.  
[www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk](http://www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk)

The Rigby Taylor Pairs final was played at The Berkshire G.C. in late autumn, and the finalists were blessed with a fine winter's day. The Red Course provided a true test of golf for both pairs although Barry Holt from Burford G.C. struggled with a sore back after the two cooked breakfasts that he polished off or was The Great Holty using mind games on his opponents.

As the day progressed it was neck and neck with neither team able to take a commanding lead, nor neither team moving more than two holes ahead.

Teams were all square on the 18th as a sudden death payoff ensued. Sid Arrowsmith, who goes by the nickname, steady Eddie, had not been his normal consistent self off the tee for most of the game. Sid stepped up to the plate and blasted a long straight drive down the middle of the 21st hole to win and be crowned the Rigby Taylor BB&O Pairs winners for 2007.

The opponents from Waterstock G.C., Dan Gascoyne and Paul Tipping, fought bravely and indeed at times seemingly had the title in the bag, provided fantastic camaraderie and with true team spirit conceded the Rigby Taylor Trophy to Barry and Sid.

A big thank you to Course Manager Chris Lomas for arranging courtesy of the Red Course for the final and Gareth Acteson from Rigby Taylor for organizing and ensuring that all the people who took part throughout 2007 had fantastic days as did the finalists at The Berkshire G.C. Entry forms for the 2008 competition are underway and will be sent out to all members shortly.

On the 23rd April this year, the Spring Tournament will be underway and hosted this year by Chiltern Forrest G.C. which nestles in the Chilterns on the edge of Wendover Woods.

This will be your chance to win a place for The National Tournament later in the year and to take on a real golfing challenge which is The Badger, a 160 yard par 3 which is featured in the book "The 100 most extraordinary holes in England" and believe me you are in for a real surprise, especially if the wind blows. Enough said. Remember to put this date in your diary.

Entry forms will be sent out in good time with the TH White section fixture card for 2008 and details and information can also be downloaded from the section website which is [bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk](http://bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk)

If anyone out there has any news of views please get in touch.  
Have a great 2008

Mark Day [mark.day@tacitgolf.com](mailto:mark.day@tacitgolf.com)



## MID-ANGLIA

South Beds Golf Club hosted the Turkey Trot way back at the start of December and the results were as follows: 1. South Beds GC, J. Smith, M. Davies, D. Mennie and P. Compton. 2. Berkhamsted GC, L. Rance, D. Quinlan, M. Wood, G. Ravenscroft. 3. Mount Pleasant GC, G. Simkins, B. Brown, D. Hodkin, S. Moss. Longest Drive was won by Dale Housden and Nearest the Pin was Steve Moss. Special thanks go to Barry McCloskey, of Avoncrop, for generously sponsoring the prizes. Thanks also to all the other members of the trade for supporting the day and thanks to South Beds Golf Club for hosting the event. I understand the course was in exceptional condition and was a great credit to Tom Hooper and his dedicated team. Golfer of the Year was won by Steve Mason, from Stocks Golf Club, who did comment that the criteria was very complicated and, most crucially, he was the only one that could afford the bribe! Seriously though, well done, Steve.

For those of you that are acquainted with Mark Day, from Tacit, please take time to visit [www.justgiving.com/markday1](http://www.justgiving.com/markday1) as Mark is running the London Marathon this year in aid of the charity SENSE. On behalf of the Mid-Anglia Section, I would like to wish you the very best of luck and hope all goes well.

Some of the more senior members of the Section who may remember the days when Mods, Rockers, Scooters and the Brighton scene were the vogue may be interested to know that in April it will be 30 years since the making of the film Quadrophenia. To celebrate the anniversary there is to be a reunion for the cast of the film and guess who is going? None other than our own Mark Ellis who appeared as an extra due largely to the fact that he lived in the Brighton area and was the proud owner of a Vespa (I think he still makes some deliveries on it!). Oh yeah, and man can he act!

Starring alongside Mark were many other young budding actors and musician, many of which have suffered at the merciless hands of destiny and fate. Take Phil Daniels for example. He became a drunk in bar run by the Pub Landlord before moving to Walford Square to eek out a living





# Around the Green



## KENT

Finally some spring-like weather, skies are blue, the sun is beaming down gloriously, hoards of happy people are whistling away as they pass by, seagulls swoop majestically over the clear, blue ocean, the sand is starting to get too hot to walk on...Hold it! I hear you say. That doesn't sound like a normal February day in downtown Dartford!

That's because I'm not in Dartford, I'm on a beach in Tenerife and thoroughly making the most of a well earned winter break!

Back in good old Blighty I recently posted out close to 300 calendars to all of you in the Kent Section. These were the brainchild of several but pretty much individually produced by Danny Stunt, of Redlibbets Golf Club. Superb job mate and thank you. These must-have adornments for your desktop not only highlight our five golf days and all our sponsors, they contain some great photos of courses in our area. If you have not yet received one then please leave a message on the webpage, alternatively I shall bring a few to our first event at The London Club on March 25. We hope these calendars will become an annual production run to all of you. Entries will be limited to the London Club event for our National Qualifier so please don't delay in returning your forms to David.

We are also still compiling an event calendar for 2009 and would ask any of you interested in hosting a golf event to let us know. It really isn't as daunting as you think!

Sorry for the short report this month but I need to roll over before my back burns too much.

Happy holidays!

*Rob Holland*



## SOUTH WEST & WALES REGION – SOUTH WEST

I started last month by remarking how quickly the winter has evaporated in front of our eyes. By the time this one comes into print, we'll have started Spring renovation of greens and really be thinking about the mowing season. At Minch, we'll be continuing to Drill and Fill greens using the Ecosolve machine, and will combine this with deep scarifying, mini hollow tining, and vertidrainage. Some greens get up to four passes on pretty well the same day. The thinking behind this is lots of holes and disruption for a short time only, and then leave things alone. Sounds a bit drastic, but this has worked really well over the last few seasons, and allowed us to get the greens off to a good start early in the season. Michael Evans, who for years was Greens Chairman at my last club Liley Brook, used to comment – "it's surprising what you can do to grass – it just keeps coming back" – hope he's right!

Harrogate Week was an outstanding success. Big thanks to all HQ staff, officers, and rank and file greenkeepers who contributed so much to make it so. Congratulations to Tim Needham, whose letter won the South West Section Patronage Scheme-sponsored place. One or two little wrinkles from

as a dodgy car dealer only to die in one of his cut and shut motors! Sting played in a band made up from members of the "Old Bill", tried to save the world by singing and was last seen half way up the Amazon rain forest. As for greengrocer's son, Ray Winstone, apart from a few minor films, lavish screenplays and more notably voicing over the part of Soldier Sam in the Magic Roundabout, nobody's ever heard of him. Whereas Mark went on to a glamorous lifestyle of managing exclusive Country Clubs such as Mentmore and Stocks before jetting off to Spain as a gigolo only to return to his current position at Vassgro. Well good luck Mark, I hope you enjoy the reunion and don't waste too much time signing autographs.

After making the article last month, Jim Cassidy, from Ashridge, can't keep out of the news. Jim is off to Golden Eagle Golf Club near Lisbon in Portugal to manage the golf course. Good luck to you and your family Jim and keep in contact.

*Craig Spooner* [craig.spooner@advanta-seeds.co.uk](mailto:craig.spooner@advanta-seeds.co.uk)



## SOUTH EAST REGION – SURREY

Wednesday, February 6. My 2008 New Year resolution is not intact any longer and it's all the fault of the greenkeepers who were supposed to look out for me at Harrogate. Ron Christie and Douglas Fernie, how can you have let me slip on the muddy ground outside Rigatoni's restaurant and blame it on excessive wine when you both know about my unfortunate medical inability to tolerate even the smallest quantity of the evil drink. Whoever slipped that small sherry into my Cherryade ought to feel ashamed that my resolution, not to indulge this year, has failed again and I must now wait until 2009 for another opportunity. Oh well, never mind, here's to next year's vintage.

There are out there, in this greenkeeping industry, some who will want to enter the knockout Surrey Bowl. If you have not received an entry form please contact Roger Tydeman, he's the man in charge or even the Tydeman in charge, on his mobile 07711399036. The deadline is April 1.

Most members will remember, Mark Day, a larger than life character when he used to call on you, in Surrey, a few years ago. Well Mark has lost a little weight and has decided to run in the London Marathon this year for charity. He needs sponsors so if you have a few pence to spare please contact him on 07887723377.

One of Surrey Section's members latest addition to the worlds population belongs to Mairead and Craig Earnshaw, Oak Park GC. Padraig, 8lbs, was born on January 17. Congratulations and good luck to you all.

After a happy event it is with regret that I have to report on the accidental death of a young Surrey greenkeeper. Scott Swanson, the 17 year old son of Head Greenkeeper, Steve Swanson, was killed in a vehicle accident just before his 18th birthday. Our deepest sympathy to Scott's family and friends.

*Brian Willmott* [brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk)



## SOUTH COAST SECTION

the week – like I arrived at the Cairn Hotel on the Sunday afternoon with a virtually empty car park to choose from. So naturally, I parked at the end of a row, not too far from the door, but well out of the way of delivery trucks etc, and promptly woke up on Monday morning with my car up to its axles in a dirty great flood. “Oi Worster - your poncy new car’s sinking out there” laughed a couple of hung-over greenkeepers over breakfast – I said “BMW can expect a pretty bl\*\*dy strong letter of complaint if it does”! Mind you, I got my own back the following morning as they had strayed into a club during the late evening, and the barman recommended a B-52 house cocktail. On the second visit to the bar he suggested they try a B-53 cocktail. The next thing they knew, they were up to B-58, and no one was quite sure what they were doing, where they were staying, or even who they were any more. Will some people never learn? Dave Rosselli and Adam Matthews were still reeling from two days cooped up with Frank Newberry (no offence Frank!) Worryingly, they’ve picked up some disturbingly clever management techniques – I never win an argument these days. The Disturbance Theory was both interesting, controversial, and, well, disturbing really, but if the attendance was anything to go by, of importance to a lot of people. Henry Bechelet and the team were just so enthusiastic, and gave a pretty well balanced picture.

The Conference Keynote speaker – “Spike” Jetsum, recently of the Red Arrows, was simply phenomenal. He brought home the importance of the team ethic – of everyone buying into the team and working together. A video of that for a rainy day in the shed, would be a superb motivational tool. Thanks to all who visited, exhibited, and put so much in.

The Section Spring Tournament will be at Clevedon Golf Club on April 24, the haunt of my old friend Barry Reeves. Barry has been at Clevedon in excess of 30 years, having been a Pro for a while, and has overseen the complete reconstruction of all the greens and an extension to the course. One of our most experienced members, and looking so well on it! There will be golf, and a short educational presentation by Peter Hampton, and Steve Nixon, of Bernhards. Details of our Section Education Programme will have been posted on the website using the Education Bulletin Board. Please check regularly for updates. We would welcome any suggestions, and members requests can be delivered using sponsorship from both our Patronage Scheme, and the Education Support Fund. So if there’s something you’ve always wanted to learn about, but never dared to ask (within reason!) please get in touch.

Hot on the heels of the Spring Tournament will be the popular Greenkeeper/ Amateur event at Minchinhampton Old Course on May 13. Timed just before “Brown Friday” (when the cows come out), this should be the best time of year to play this historic course. Look forward to seeing you there.

Finally, with the advent of improved club and ball technology, our greensheds are well in range of sliced balls from a nearby par 5 tee. Even the seniors are quite capable of carrying a ball into the compound with monotonous regularity. Imagine then my Mechanics concern when he read an advert in a golf magazine explaining how a heated golf ball will travel yet further - and purchasing a carry-case with an electric element inside will keep the balls at the “Optimum Temperature” for maximum distance. “Blimey” he muttered – “they’ll be dropping like fiery meteors from the sky next” – “better check-out the fire drill, just in case”!

Let’s have some feedback on Spring Renovation etc. on your courses.

Paul Worster [paulw@mgcnew.co.uk](mailto:paulw@mgcnew.co.uk) 01453 837355

First of all a big thank you to Chris Bitten our Secretary for completing February’s Around The Green article. Unfortunately I was one of the many who fell to the dreadful bug that was going around at the turn of the year, but glad to say now I’m fighting fit.

I now have the dates for this year’s Golf Days. Our first outing is the Spring Tournament which will be held at Arlesford GC on Thursday, May 1. This is always a very special occasion as we always remember Colin White. So please come along and support what I know will be a very enjoyable day.

The Summer Tournament will be at Burley GC on Thursday, July 10; Autumn Tournament at Salisbury & South Wilts GC on Thursday, October 9 and the Turkey Trot once again at Barton-On-Sea GC on Wednesday, December 10.

Other important dates are: The Match with the Secretaries at Brockenhurst GC on Wednesday, June 4 and the Annual Match between the South West Section which will be a fantastic occasion as it will be held at Remedy Oak GC on August 27. All of these above fixtures will be on the fixture card which you should all receive soon, if you have not already received.

The Pairs Competition is continuing this year with Alan Magee organising the draw and the running of this event. Please support it as it is an excellent opportunity to get to know fellow greenkeepers and play different courses. To register please contact Alan on: 01202 606668 or send him a cheque made out to “BIGGA South Coast” with details of you and your playing partner. Cheques to be sent to Alan 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 of 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: 07859 053054 or on email: [glassy2003@hotmail.com](mailto:glassy2003@hotmail.com).

And finally, remember to keep me up to date with all the news in the area. Please contact me on the number below.

Joe Crawley 07721 389200



## DEVON & CORNWALL

Our first meeting of 2008 took place on a reasonably pleasant day (for January) at the beautiful links of West Cornwall and was sponsored by Barenburg UK Ltd and Cornwall Farmers, our thanks to them.

Attendance was in the low 60’s with approximately half of who tackled the course, myself included, I had the pleasure of the company of Andy Dunstan, Head Greenkeeper from Newquay GC, and Tim Ellis, First Assistant from Mullion, for the round-all of us a bit rusty I’m afraid-but we had fun!



# Around the Green

The course was in excellent condition and our thanks go to Course Manager, Keith Kemp, and his team for the use of the course for the day. The format for the day was an individual stableford 3/4 handicap for the Barenburg Trophy. The results were 1. Nick Olds, W.Cornwall, 37pts. 2. Steve Elliot, W.Cornwall, 36pts. 3. Roger Neale, Taunton & Pickeridge, 34pts. There was also Nearest the Pin on the par 3 15th won by Chris Ralph from Hele Park Golf Centre, and Longest Drive on the 18th won by Tony (Jacko) James, Head Greenkeeper from Killiow Park.

The non-golfers course walk was attended by the rest and proved to be of great interest as Andy Cole along with Steve Gingell, from STRI, gave a talk on practical sustainable golf course management.

After an excellent lunch, our thanks to the catering staff, the talk was on course policy, forward planning with you and your members, and a very interesting presentation by Steve Gingell on global warming and its affects, during which we were shown average temperatures in the UK over the passed ten years or so and how they have risen-certainly something for us all to think about.

On a lighter note just a reminder of the spring workshop on Wednesday, March 5 at Fingle Glen Golf Club, nr Exeter, on subjects such as sustainability, water and nutrient management, grass breeding and selection. Guest speakers for the day are Andy Cole STRI, Dr Neil Baldwin Amega Sciences, Brian Robinson, Director of Seed Research, and Stephen Denton, Grass Seed Development Manager, both from Rigby Taylor. Non-members such as Greens Chairman, Captains etc and non-affiliated turf grass professionals are also welcome.

A few changes to note Steve Evans, Course Manager for the last seven years at Yelverton, is starting full time work at Duchy College early February as "Greenkeeper Tutor and Assesor" Steve replaces Bill Pile who has done so much for Greenkeeping in Devon & Cornwall. George Pitts, we all know from Cannington College, is taking over the reins at Yelverton. I'm sure you'll join me in wishing all three of them best wishes for the future.

Finally our next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 12 at Royal North Devon. Here's wishing for some drier weather!

Well done to all greenkeepers who made it too Harrogate and our thank you's to; Colin Webber for the free use of his mini bus; Symbio, for sponsoring the fuel; Graeme and Tim for collecting and returning the bus, and thanks to Keith Kemp for driving both ways.

It was a really good show with some excellent seminars. It sounded like everybody enjoyed themselves.

A big thank you must go out to the Duchy College and our Section for sponsoring three students who had a great time and found it a valuable experience. We plan to provide a bus up and back again next year, and we will be providing a free trip for one person as a raffle prize at this year's AGM.

Jerry Cole 07764 224582



## SOUTH WALES

Hi everybody, apologies for my absence over the last couple of months, but if you have not heard, my dear wife, Norma, lost her three year battle

with cancer. I would like to thank everyone for his or her support and kindness through our difficult time, thank you all.

As if that's not enough, more bad news, Ceri and Donna Richards lost their son, Evan, on the December, 20, 2007. Evan was born prematurely and suffered from serious complications. I am sure I speak for everybody when I say our thoughts are with you and your family at this sad time.

On to some good news now and its congrats to Paul and Mandy Johnson, Paul is Head Greenkeeper at Pyle & Kenfig GC and Mandy gave birth to a 7lb 1oz bouncing baby boy his name is Luke. Well done you two must be this Welsh air!

I know it's late but on December 7, 39 greenkeepers took to the links at P&K GC for our Christmas bash, our thanks to P&k GC for once again allowing us the use of their excellent course and facilities, to Paul and the team for all their hard work to present the course in such a fine condition, all the bar and catering staff for the excellent meal and service. Our sponsors for the day were Vitax and Celtic Mowers who were represented by Mr John Mullins and Mr. Kim Davies respectfully. Thank you for your continued support, which enables us events like today.

Onto the prize winners, and 3. Daryl Bray, 37pts; in 2. Jamie Probit, 37pts on count back; 1. Peter Lacey, with 38pts was our out going Secretary. Longest drive on the 9th was won by, guess who! Andy Roach. Nearest the pin on 12th was won by Mr Daryl Jones. The Silver Salver for best combined score over four tournaments went to Andy Hatcher, (Coed y Mwstwr ).

Our thanks to Mr Jeff Vincent, Vice Captain of P & K GC, for presenting the prizes. Last of all, thank you all for turning out, 44 of us sat down for dinner and it would be nice to see more of you at our golf days in the future.

That's it from me for now except to wish David Ward all the best in his retirement after 20 odd years' of loyal service at Royal Porthcawl Good luck! Dave, you will be sadly missed within the industry, up and down the country.

You should have all had your letters by now on the fixtures, don't forget the Spring Seminar at Royal Porthcawl on April 24.

I would like to wish Steven Chapel (Neath GC), all the best in his new role as Section Secretary. I am sure you will all give him your support.

Henry Stead 07889792190

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Section Notes - Can all notes be emailed to: [melissa@bigga.co.uk](mailto:melissa@bigga.co.uk) by the 5th of the month prior to publication please. Suggested word guide: 500