



News from the Chief Executive

I was saddened to learn of the sudden death of Bert Cross who has been a leading light in greenkeeping and an example to all for a great number of years. I have enjoyed Bert's company on many occasions and he will be missed by many people, not only in the UK but also in Africa, where he and his wife did so much unsung charitable work. Our sympathy goes to the family that he leaves behind.

The building work at BIGGA House is progressing well and the completion deadline of the end of April should easily be achieved. We are already surprised by how much more space the development has created and we eagerly await the time when we can see if the office furniture fits as we have planned.

There has been some concern by the Board regarding the Association's vulnerability should I not be able to carry out my duties for some unforeseen reason and there have been suggestions of the appointment of a Deputy, or someone who may aspire to that role in due course. After full consideration it has been decided to strengthen the roles of the Heads of Department so that they have joint and several responsibility for the general management of the office while still reporting to me. By improving the communication between them and me I should be able to devote more of my time to developing and reviewing the Business Plan to ensure that the Association is able to face the challenges of the industry as they exist today as well as improving its overall position. This will incorporate greater use by the Board and the Management Team of the sub committees and details of scheduled meetings will be advertised in both Greenkeeper International and on the BIGGA website. Additionally the Board has created an Environmental sub committee that will look at the Association's own policy as well as developing initiatives for the industry.

The annual selection of a new Vice Chairman has become increasingly difficult in recent years as the demands of the role increase but so do the demands of the job held by suitable candidates. Several members have expressed an interest in being considered and so in order to make the process more democratic the Board will in future invite the Sections to make nominations through their respective Regional board. Nominations will then be reviewed by the main Board and assessed for interview by the Chairman, the Past Chairman, the Vice Chairman and myself. A job description will be available to anyone interested together with broad details of the amount of time required throughout the year. No nominations will be considered without the candidate having received the prior approval and unqualified support of their employer.

Despite the breakdown of talks with the IOG the Board still feels that the Association has something to offer groundsmen and that a suitable category of membership for could still be appropriate. To this end a review panel has been set up that will look at the potential for developing this initiative and it is the intention that a report be submitted to members for their consideration in the not too distant future. This will detail the advantages to both exiting and potential members and may well incorporate a strategic alliance within the industry. While any such move does not need to be put to a meeting of members it is never the less considered by the Board to be in the best interest of the membership to allow for a process of full consultation. Once published I will be pleased to try to address any concerns that members may have.

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH REGION – CENTRAL

For anyone who isn't aware, I start this month's report with the sad news of the death of Jim Finlayson who passed away on March 16. Jim was a great supporter of greenkeeping over the years, always keen to lend a hand at Section events and a good friend to many in the industry. Our thoughts are with his wife, Margaret, and his family.

Weather wise, It has been a strange old start to the year again up here on the East coast of Scotland with what feels like even stronger winds than normal for a sustained period and light snow falls both over Easter and early April. March was so dry that many Course Managers were hand watering greens during the day just to keep the grass alive.

Thanks go to Elliot Small for the work he has done in writing up the early history of the Greenkeeping Association in Scotland which is available to view on the Central Section website: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk It is fascinating to discover that greenkeepers were getting together in the very early 1900's to discuss their situation. I am told there is no truth that in the first picture on display Elliot is the guy second from the right in the front row!

The first week in April saw the American Golf Course Architects hold their AGM in Scotland along with a tour of some of our country's finest courses. While in St Andrews they also took the opportunity to visit the Castle Course which is due to open in June and were extremely positive in their feedback, both in the layout and the grow in conditions they saw.

Gordon Moir



EAST

I write this report in early April with Primula Drummondii's and some of the dwarf Rhododendrons in full flower in our garden, despite the artic conditions outside. The Fine Turf industry is at present extremely volatile with price increases almost becoming a weekly occurrence. Hopefully prices will stabilise in the not too distant future.

Our congratulations this month go to Scott Poole on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at The Hirsell Golf Club, in Coldstream. I am sure his previous employers, Duns Golf Club, will wish him well! He commences his new appointment on the 7th April. The new Head Greenkeeper at Duns is Scott's former Deputy, Wayne Ford. He joined the club as a trainee in January 2000, working initially under the guidance of Ian Aitchison and latterly under Scott. I am sure he will prove a worthy successor.

The previous incumbent at The Hirsell, Geoff Logan, has departed after many years loyal service to set up his own Landscape/Garden Maintenance business in Prestonpans. I am sure all in the section will join me in wishing him best wishes for the future.

I also have changes to report at Melrose with John Christie departing to join the grounds maintenance team at Borders General Hospital. He has worked at Melrose for a number of years after learning the trade at Minto Golf Club.

Around the Green

His first boss at Minto, (a real blast from the past!) Sandy Whillans, has taken over the hot seat at Melrose.

Out of Greenkeeping for a number of years, he returned a few years ago assisting John on a seasonal basis. I am sure Sandy's wealth of knowledge will benefit his employers in his new role.

On a personal note, Roz is off to Crete in a few days time, the down side for me being all the household chores. Oh well, roll on October!

Until Next Month,

Mike Dooner



NORTH

As I am writing this month's article it is absolutely dinging it down with snow outside. At last some sort of a Winter. I find it a bit disturbing that Aberdeen and the surrounding areas have been named the hottest places in the British Isles just lately. It's fine, but in February and March? You kind of expect the snow to come at some point but it is getting close to the beginning of the season for us now and we're just finishing off winter programmes.

It might be difficult for some of us to get onto the course to finish off these programmes. You can just hear the moans from the golfers already, can't you? We don't seem to be getting anything like we used to in the way of weather. Just a sign of things to come, what do you think?

Stevie Frost, of Royal Aberdeen, has just celebrated (if you can call it that) his 25th year at the golf club. At the recent do in the clubhouse to commemorate his achievement, his boss and friend, Robert Patterson, commented that if he was there for another 25 years he'll be 66. Who needs enemies? Congratulations Steve and on behalf of the Section. Wish you all the best for the next 25 years.

One guy who is leaving the Section for another golf club is Stuart Cordiner, of Peterhead Golf Club. He has taken the big step of moving down to Portsmouth and working on a course down there. Again on behalf of the Section we wish you all the best. Hughie has said that he is going to miss you. Ah bless!

The two greenkeepers teams will be taking part in the annual trades competition at Hazelhead golf club. There is only one problem though, we're a man short. Anyone interested in taking part ideally should be a 3 handicapper or less and get in touch with George Mitchell, at Newmachar Golf Club, on 07704851429. I did offer the services of Euan Rankin but George said he'd manage. If any of you fancy going along to watch the lads then I'm sure that they'll appreciate the support.

You should of all received your forms for both of the outings that section stages. Please keep them safe. If you haven't got yours yet then please get in touch with Dale Robertson.

Dale received a phone call from Stuart Grant, of Ballater Golf Club, who has been lucky enough to be selected for the BIGGA Support team at Royal Birkdale. He was wondering if anyone else had been selected and if possible share transport down. If there is you could maybe contact Stuart on 01339 755567.

On a final note I have a complaint from the in-laws. In the last Section news I mentioned 'lads' a couple of times. I do know of a couple of 'girls' in the Section. I apologise and will make sure that I include you in the future.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links GC



NORTHERN REGION - NORTH WEST

I have to start with some sad news about Colin Denny, who is a North West committee member. Colin is the Course Manager at Heaton Moor Golf Club where we are staging our spring tournament. I hear he is making a slow recovery after suffering a stroke. From me, and all the North West committee, Good luck Colin and we hope you are soon back to good health.

A few movers and groovers. John Davenport has moved from Turton GC. to Dunnerholm GC, near Barrow, and an old friend of mine, Neil Woolfrey, has moved to Bolton GC. from Great Lever and Farnworth.

I have just finished watching the Grand National and am pleased to say that I had the winner. Five pence each way, not bad, better in my pocket than the bookies.

If you have any news please contact me on 0151-289-4625
my e-mail is jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



SHEFFIELD

The Sheffield Section held its spring lecture at Rotherham Golf Club on Wednesday March 12. The two speakers on the day were Stephen Bernhard and Martyn Jones. Both lectures were very interesting and I'm sure left everyone with a few things to think about. The day was well attend by members and trade, although as with all our Sheffield events there are still places open for anyone else who may be interested in our lecture or golf days.

I would also like to thank our sponsors for the day, Rigby Taylor and Bernhards. Special thanks go to Mike Brear and Steve Nixon who helped organise the day. A big thanks as well goes to Rotherham GC for letting the Section use there wonderful facilities again also the catering staff at Rotherham, who once again provided us with a wonderful buffet which I'm sure everyone enjoyed.

During the lecture at Rotherham a presentation was made to Chris Astle for his seven years service as Secretary. I'm sure everyone will agree with me in once again thanking Chris for all his hard work. Chris has also recently left Wheatley GC to take up a new position in the industry working for Golf and Turf machinery. Good luck Chris

All golf clubs in the Section will be receiving fixture cards for the 2008

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season shortly. Many thanks to Aitkens for sponsoring these cards and especially Peter Fell for pulling it all together for us. All Section events for 2008 and will be listed on the fixture card, so it will be nice to see more and more people turn up to Sheffield Section events.

In a few days on the May 12 we will be holding our Spring competition at Coxmoor Golf Club with a 1 30 tee off time, so hopefully as many of you as possible will have returned your entry forms on time! And will be eagerly awaiting the 12th!

As usual any Section news please feel free to contact me on 07793111845 or jvl1967@sky.com (any news is worth putting in the magazine then people in the Section can hear about these things, such as moving jobs, marriages, births etc then hopefully we don't have to have months when we haven't got any Section news in the magazine!)

John Lax



NORTHERN

Hi everyone, it has been a busy month this time. The Section held a very successful spring seminar at the De Vere Oulton Hall. We would like to thank every one involved in the organisation and running of the event. Special thanks must go to Rigby Taylor and Bernhard & Company for their kind sponsorship and our guest Speakers, Martyn Jones, Stephen Bernhard and Oulton Hall's own Jim Brown. I am sure they gave everyone who attended a very interesting and enjoyable day with a lot to think about.

We say goodbye to two prominent members this month, Mel Guy who has been involved with the Section for many years and is now retiring from Sheriff Amenity, also our present Treasurer, Andy Slingsby, who is leaving to pursue another career. We wish them both good luck for the future and are sure we will see them again.

One amendment to the events calendar President's day will be held at Cookridge Hall on Wednesday, July 2 at 12.30.

Please get in touch if you have any news

Section Secretary

Adam Speight

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MIDLAND REGION – MIDLAND

Well isn't it a small world. While travelling back from Cumbria after a trout fishing trip I got talking to a bunch of chaps on their way to enlist in our Royal Navy. One of such it turned out to have been a greenkeeping student at Elmwood. A college of excellence within our field, I have been fortunate to have studied there myself. I do however wonder what skills in greenkeeping can be related towards a career in the Navy. Well I'm sure that Danny Partridge will soon find-out onboard H.M.S. Raleigh. Good luck to you all in defending our fine nation. My only experience of the nautical being in Austria with a greens mower - float it didn't!

What's this I hear; Nigel (the Dandy) Tyler has gone down on one knee and become engaged to Sue. When's the wedding date, mate? Congratulations to you both. Our thanks to Nigel/Sherriff Amenity for sponsoring this year's Section Programme card and for his good works on committee supporting our section.

Congratulations to Paul Mills, who is the new Course Manager at Penn GC. I hope that your experience there will be half as enjoyable and rewarding as my time there was.

And just to finish thanks to Bathgate Leisure for sponsoring this month's calendar page. Details of their topdressings, sands etc can be found at www.bathgatesilica.co.uk.

Sean McDade
Training and Education



EAST MIDLAND

Just to let all members know that our Summer Tournament will be held at Mickleover Golf Club on Thursday 24th July 2008, the AGM Tournament will be held at Staverton Park on Friday 31st October 2008.

We are also looking if people are interested in attending a four day First Aid course the cost of this will be £189 per person. In addition, a Talunex course will be held at Charnwood Golf Club, the price being £110 per person, but if we have over five this will reduce to £90 per person.

Please contact the Secretary Dan Rodgers on 07745 227224 if you are interested in any of these courses. Moreover, congratulations to Pete Billings on his return to the industry at Cotgrave Golf Club. We wish him good luck in his position as Course Manager.

Dan Rodgers, Shirland Golf Club, Lower delves,
Shirland, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 6AU

Dan Rodgers

Secretary

07745227224



EAST OF ENGLAND

Well what a month March has proved to be! I think just about every weather condition has been experienced in the last few weeks from beautiful warm sunshine to three inches of snow, with heavy rain and high winds in between it all. Plus the fact that Easter has been so early this year, this has meant a lot of clubs expecting summer playing conditions earlier than usual and finishing winter work a month sooner. At Immingham the course has gone from looking like it does in the middle of summer to a wet winter look all in one week, unfortunately just as 160 golfers prepared to play in our Easter Open Event. Oh well, it won't be that early again for another 30 years or so!



In the midst of all this my wife, Sam, gave birth to our first child, Archie James, arriving Easter Saturday weighing in at a healthy eight pounds. I am just about adjusting to the sleepless nights and my nappy change times are getting quicker and quicker, especially in the middle of the night. I am not sure if he is the beginning of a new greenkeeping dynasty but he has certainly volunteered for bunker raking in a few summers time!

One person leaving our Section this month is Gareth Rogers, formerly of Grimsby Golf Club. Good luck for the future to you and your family.

As I write this our first golf day of the season at Pottergate is a couple of weeks away. I am sure there will be a good turnout for the event and hopefully the weather will have settled down by then. The results will feature in next month's Section notes.

Every Section member is invited to our golf days, regardless of golfing ability. Don't be scared! The days are always fun, a good way to meet other greenkeepers, network, share problems and make friends.

All of the golf days are now booked for this year. A list of the dates should have been sent out by now, however if anyone has any queries on the dates and venues then contact Rob Welford at Cleethorpes Golf Club on 07702435122. Any Head Greenkeepers out there that are willing to host one of our events in the future should get in touch with one of the committee members.

A quick reminder to all to check out our website and register on the forums.

www.eastofenglandbigga.com

Steve Beverly
Immingham Golf Club



BERKS, BUCKS & OXON

Sunburn and ice creams last April, but it is frostbite and icicles this year, and there's more to come as April has recorded the heaviest snowfall for 20 years. Whatever happened to the proverb "Sweet April showers, do spring May flowers" or as the French say, "Avril et mai, Sont la cle de l'annee?" I will let you look it up.

The Summer Tournament has been confirmed and this year will be held at The Lambourne Club on Tuesday, June 24. Please amend the date in your diary as this has changed. Gem Professional has kindly offered to sponsor the day at a course set in 180 acres of breathtaking parkland with magnificent oaks and beech trees which adorn this prestigious private club. Traditional colonial style elegance will await those in the clubhouse with a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere to ensure we all have a great day, so please book early and send your entry forms in on time.

Other dates for your diary are The Cricket – Golf Match, IOG verses B,B &O. Yes, we are having a cricket match organised by Adam King, at Radley College, on July 9, which will consist of 9 holes on the course followed by 20-20 cricket in the latter part of the day, with a few glasses of ale and a Barbie. Do please get in touch for a great day out.

Gareth Acteson has been organising the Rigby Taylor Pairs Competition which again will be played competitively throughout 2008. Gareth has also joined the first time dad club and Fraser James Acteson was born on March 3 weighing in at 7lb 10. Natasha and baby are doing very well; Dad has been on burping lessons and struggling to stay awake. Congratulations to the new Acteson family.

Entry forms will be sent out with plenty of time and can also be downloaded from the section website. www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk

If anyone out there has any news or views please get in touch.

Mark Day
mark.day@taticgolf.com



SOUTH EAST REGION - ESSEX

I must apologise for the lack of Section news over the past couple of months. I have posted the March and April news on the website and have been keeping you up to date on the comings and goings in the 'Latest News Section' on the site.

We have the golf event dates for this year: Spring Tournament, Thursday, May 15, Upminster GC; Summer Medal, Wednesday, June 25, The Warley Park GC; John Deere Challenge (Invitation Only), Thursday, August 7, Abridge Golf & Country Club; Autumn Tournament, Thursday, August 14, Three Rivers Golf & Country Club; Winter Tournament, Thursday, October 2, Bentley GC; AGM and Christmas Tournament, Thursday, November 27, The Essex Golf & Country Club. The Knockout Competition starts shortly so watch the website and your post for entry forms.

The events this year will be starting a bit earlier than in past years. So please check your start times carefully and allow time to get to the events. As I have stated on the website, in the March news, I have now taken over the running of the website. I would like to improve on what is already a good site and would if ask any of you could email me, anything that you think may be of interest to our members.

By the time you receive this news item we will be nearly ready for our first event of the year at Upminster GC, I'm sure Dougie Fernie, the Course Manager will be.

Please refer to the website for all, up to the minute information in the 'Latest News Section'. I will be using this as an update notice board. Course information, starting times and directions will all be in the 'Latest Golf Event' section and I will be posting this as soon as I have the start times from Antony.

Have a good month and look forward to seeing you all at Upminster. Anyone who has any news for inclusion in ATG or the website can Contact me at: highwoods.photographic@talktalk.net or call me on: 01206 852353 or 07764852337.

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer
www.essexbigga.co.uk

Around the Green



SURREY

Sunday April 6. It has just stopped snowing and here in Banstead we have had about three inches of the stuff. It even settled on the roads so my trip to a tile shop in Reigate was a carefully driven outing. I know you're all wandering why is Brian wanting to buy tiles, so I'm going to tell you, but not yet. Gone are my days of writing incessantly about myself and my holidays, etc. That little reminder from our Secretary in the last mail out certainly made me think that it was perhaps a little selfish to bore you month after month with my comings and goings.

On Tuesday April 8, when you all go off and play in this year's first golf day at Royal Laleham GC, I and my family including the mother-in-law, the grandchildren, my two daughters and partners and my son-in-law's mother and father are going down to Studland Bay in Dorset, I believe I mentioned it in last month's edition, for a few days vacation so this weather had better change or there'll be no undressing on the beach for me this year.

Darren Woodward, Course Manager at Tylney Park GC, telephoned me last week with the news that his wife, Fiona, had given birth to his first son, Samuel Lewes, 7lb 10ozs, on March 18.

Darren said it was a sun roof birth and that mother and baby are both well. I was drinking tea with Tony Bremer, at Dorking GC, at the time and it wasn't until I had written down all the information that Darren had given me and said goodbye that Tony reminded me that I hadn't asked Darren the name of the father.

I laughed at Tony's little joke but his young assistant, who was drinking tea with us, said it was important to know or the father might feel left out. Les Salmon, who was also there, has had an operation for a new knee about six months ago and maybe at the next golf day, if you play with him, and it's not too stiff, he'll show it to you in the showers.

Please keep letting me know about this sort of exciting news or I will tell you about my trip to the tile shop in Reigate, you have been warned!

Brian Willmott
brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk



KENT

And so into spring...or so it should be!

As I write this I am watching a good five to six inch covering of snow settle on my course on what should be a very busy weekend!

At least the weather was kind to us when we made our recent pilgrimage to the Mecca of golf in our area at The London Club. Despite many being heavily laden with work duties at our own courses 38 of us could not turn

down the opportunity to take on the challenge of the recently named PGA European Open host course for 2008.

Meeting early in the palatial clubhouse and casting our eyes out over the magnificent surroundings, we couldn't wait to get out there and see how our individual games would fair against such a stiff test. Our very gracious hosts, Peter Todd and Glenn Kirby, were all too happy to explain some of the intricacies involved in preparing a course for such a prestigious event and how they tone it down for when the PGA roll into town! Seriously though, it was fascinating to hear of some of the preparations required for the tournament logistics, hospitality areas, tented villages and road building proving, as Peter said, "The golf course is the easy bit!"

So my companions for the day and I set off for the first tee eager to get started. I must give them credit for inspiring me to play well enough to claim second place overall by generally being great fun. Thanks to Gavin Kinsella, Wayne Syers and Chris Mardon.

Despite the weather being a bit chilly and breezy, we were at least afforded dry conditions for the day and the quality of the course continued right to the last. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the PGA's decision to play this venue can only raise the profile of all Kentish courses and benefit us all in the region.

A superb dinner (what else?) followed our golf. Our hosts were again bombarded with specific questions on how the course would be adapted for the pros during the European Open. As a result, Peter and Glenn have very kindly offered to give us the opportunity to have a course walk on June 18th which is about two weeks prior to the main event so we can see what standards are required on course and how all associated aspects of tournament hosting are organised.

This is planned to start at 4 pm, should last a couple of hours and will be followed by a barbeque. Many thanks to our hosts for this gesture as it will give us a rare insight into major tournament preparation. Incidentally, if anyone wishes to volunteer to assist in the preparation of the course before or during the event then please let me know and I shall pass on any such requests to Peter.

On the day I firmly believe we were all winners as it was such a pleasure playing that course but results were as follows: 1. Malloy Parks, 37pts; 2. Rob Holland 35 pts; 3. Michael Wigstone 32 pts. Longest drive was by Mark Bell and highest cumulative points total on the Par 3s was by Glenn Kirby. Many thanks to our prize providers on the day. They were: Ernest Doe, Rigby Taylor and T. Parker & Sons.

This event was a great start to our year, long may it continue. Congratulations to Peter and Glenn for providing a stunning venue and belated congratulations also to Peter on his BIGGA Vice-Chairmanship appointment. Our next event is at Sundridge Park on the 7th May where we shall meet up at 11 am for a ploughman's lunch followed by 18 holes on the East Course and a dinner in the evening.

Please consult website for entry forms, prices are fixed for the year at £35 Course Managers and Trade members and £30 for Assistants.

Best of British
Rob Holland

www.kentgreenkeepers.co.uk



SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH WALES REGION

- SOUTH WALES

Hi everybody, well I think we have had a typical Spring, 17 degrees one day, snow the next! But at least the sun has some power in it now. At the Grove we are waiting to overseed and top dress and apply our base feed. Our winter lectures are over at Pencoed College. I would like to thank Martin Townsend, Countrywide, for their support and wish him well.

I just wish more of you would attend these lectures as they take a lot of time and effort to organise. It's like Around The Green. It's about your Section and I am sure there are things that go on on your course that maybe of interest to the rest of us, so let's hear about it!

That's it for now lads and lasses. I would like to just say Hello to an old friend of mine and ex-boss, Walter Jones, Walter was Head Greenkeeper at Southerndown GC in the 70s and I was his First Assistant. He contacted me after reading about Norma in the mag. He is 97 now and we said we would meet up and have lunch looking forward to it Walter.

Ok, you lot by the time you read this we will be looking forward to our Spring tournament at Ash so let's see more off you.

News and views (no matter how small) to henry@henrystead.wanadoo.co.uk. and remember keep smiling.

Henry Stead



DEVON AND CORNWALL

Our March get together took place at Royal North Devon on the 12th. Unfortunately the weather was against us, although generally dry it was very windy (not ideal for seaside links!) Nevertheless a good turnout ensured an enjoyable day. Our sponsors for this meeting we're Vitax and Bayer represented by Mike King and Paul Clifton respectively, our thanks once again to them. A warm welcome was given to Jane Jones, our Regional Administrator, who joined us for the day. We also had some of our golf club Captains, Secretaries, etc as guests for the day.

The competition among our golfers was won by Gavin Moore, Launceston GC, with 27pts, 2. Andrew Prowse, Porthpean GC, 25pts, 3. Andrew Dunstan (on countback) also with 25pts - very commendable considering the conditions. The Longest Drive up the last was won by one of my playing partners Andy (rarely out of the prizes) Parker from Crediton and nearest the pin was won by another steady eddie Gordon Tamlyn, from Mullion.

The course walk was well supported as we we're joined by Bob Taylor from STRI. Our thanks to Mark Evans (Course Manager) and his team for the courtesy of the course for the day and the wonderful condition it was in. I would also like to extend our thanks to the catering staff for the excellent meal and service and to Royal North Devon for their warm welcome.

The afternoon talk was given by Bob Taylor on ecology and was very topical and educational, our thanks to Bob for his time. During the afternoon a plaque was presented to Steve Evans for his dedication to the section over the last 17 years where he has served in many roles including Secretary and Chairman. Our thanks to Steve for all his efforts.

A few items of news to report, a belated congratulations to John Bullen, Course Manager at Staddon Heights, and his wife on the birth of their baby daughter. I was down in Cornwall on my travels recently and called into see one of the Course Managers who I'd heard had recently sprouted wings! Jim, at Truro, was 50 (sorry Jim) last week and with the help of his family fulfilled a long term ambition of doing a parachute jump! The whole event was filmed on dvd and before he knew it was appearing on a well known website where mad people doing mad things can be seen! Well done mate and happy birthday!

Our summer meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 23at Lanhydrock. Look forward to seeing you all there.

Finally, during the year the winners of most of the golf competitions are presented with cups or shields. If you are currently in possession of one of these, or know who is can you let me know please.

Email greenwaysjrc@aol.com or phone 07764 224582 if you have any news.

Jerry Cole



SOUTH WEST

Question - What could possibly be more fiendishly difficult than deep linear aerating 36 greens with a Graden scarifier?

Answer - A Graden scarifier fitted with a sand injector - that's what. Couple that with a gale force wind blowing relentlessly the whole time and you start to get the picture. We used 2.5 tonnes of kiln dried sand per green - every last grain of which had to be carried across the green in buckets by a dedicated team of greenkeepers. There was also the small matter of tidying up afterwards - scraping off and shovelling away by hand. Good fun. As we staggered in at the end of day two - one of the lads was heard to mutter - "It'd better be bl**dy well worth it"!

Also did a few greens with the Gwaze system - compressed air injection has come a long way - it only took around 15 minutes to complete an average sized green with almost no surface disturbance. I say almost no disturbance - the air force is so powerful, that in the odd place or two it actually "blew-up" the surface of the green in the most spectacular fashion. The operator wasn't aware of the explosions behind him until the clods started hitting him on the back of the neck! Just shows the compacted nature of the ground. With a little gentle turf-beating, the green was restored, and play recommenced.

The inaugural Frank Newberry Management Masterclass was held at Minchinhampton Golf Club recently. I was reminded that the day I originally got in touch with Frank to set things up was back in January, and was the one snowy day of the entire winter. I rang Frank on his mobile, and when the call eventually connected Frank said - "Don't worry about the background

Around the Green



noise, I'm just walking down the street". I looked at the snow and hail beating against my office window and said - "I hope you've got a decent umbrella." He said "No - a parasol actually - I'm in Gran Canaria with the Norwegian Greenkeepers and it's 28 degrees!"

It definitely wasn't 28 degrees on the day of the Masterclass itself - things got off to a bad start when Franks Sat-Nav took him to the middle of Minchinhampton Common, and then left him there! Matters went from bad to worse, when for some inexplicable reason none of the electric points in the clubhouse were working. Not too easy to give a Powerpoint without the Power bit. However, we're made of sterner stuff and overcame these tiny difficulties for a first rate day which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. We hope very much to run series two in the winter, so if you're up for a little honing of those Management Skills - drop me a mail to register interest.

Very hopeful to run a turf clinic afternoon at Chippenham Golf Club in June. Watch this space for further details, and this day will also be publicised via the Golf Unions direct to your Secretary's office, and on the BIGGA website in the Education section.

Excavator Safety Training is complete for the Spring - 21 greenkeepers plus a celebrity, Dave Saltman M.D. of Pitchcare, got safely through the training. Well done to all and thanks to all those who helped. We'll run again in the autumn on demand - please let me know any interest.

The first match of the season is looming at Stinchcombe Hill Golf Club on June 5. Do give Team Captain Wayne "The Special One" Vincent a ring 07958 630590 - He and "Sir Alex" Garland will no doubt select the best team available to them (although they'll have to go some to beat the £5 million strike partnership of Cristiano Pring and Carlos Greaves from last year).

Finally had a great laugh the other day along the lines of the Radio 5 news presenter who "corpsed" (collapsed with laughter) live on air one day last week, and couldn't finish reading the news.

I was waiting patiently in the Pro-shop for a word with the Pro, and the customer in front was being really rude & awkward. He was an elderly short guy who claimed to have ordered two electric hire buggies for his round, but no-one could find a record of the order, and the buggies weren't ready. Eventually, he was being so rude and bloody-minded, the Pro patiently said - "okay - so that's two buggies in the name of Mr.. er..?" The answer was quick in coming - "Shufflebottom". There was a moment of stunned silence, and then the first snigger in the queue behind him. Within seconds most people, including me and the Pro, were gasping for air. Fortunately, Mr Shufflebottom somehow affected not to notice.

Hope by the time this hits the shelves the weather'll have sorted itself out, and we've got some nice warm spring conditions. Today (the day of writing) is April 8 and the temp was -4.5C on the way to work this morning. Just had a quick glance back in the records, and you have to go back to 1996 to get anywhere near that.

I'll look forward to welcoming you at Minchinhampton Old Course on May 13 for the Greenkeeper- Amateur. No cows, so no need to bring shovels or wellies - "Brown Friday" (when they are let out) is not 'till the 15th this year so we should be okay.

Paul Worster
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SOUTH COAST SECTION

Well this is a bit of a quiet time for news in the Section. However, as a reminder the match with the Secretaries is fast approaching and is to be held at Brockenhurst GC on Wednesday, June 4.

As I write this column it is currently snowing outside so I sincerely hope that the weather has warmed up by the time you read the column in the magazine!

The Tournament Organiser is Kevan Glass. Please contact Kevan if you wish to book or pay for any of the Section's 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.

One piece of news is that I have changed employers and have gone back to work for Vitax Ltd. Please note the new mobile number below, which I can be contacted on if you have any information for the magazine column. While I'm on this topic, it would be brilliant if you can let me know any news you have or acquire regarding the section, it makes the reading a bit less dry and gets me away from a list of Golf Day dates and information. Please have a think and pass on anything you think would be good to include and spread to the Section membership.

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Section Notes -

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