



News from the Chief Executive

It is now 10 years since we moved into BIGGA HOUSE and as I reflect over those years I realise how so much has happened to change the Association and to change the industry in which we all work.

BIGGA has continued to establish itself as a key body within golf and through the development of closer working relationships it has grown to become an integral part of the management of the game.

Greenkeepers are at long last beginning to be recognised for their professionalism and their value to the club and, while there is still much work to be done, I would ask you to cast your minds back and look at how things used to be in the so called 'Good old days'.

The Association has enjoyed a period of growth on the back of the development of golfing facilities and its improved positioning has enabled it to influence conditions of service and the general education of all greenkeepers, not just those of its members.

However, the halcyon days of the early to mid 90's are over and golf is facing some serious challenges with a changing attitude towards club membership, environmental pressures, the demand by the golfer for better value for money and latterly a sharp decline in the economy to name but a few.

There is no doubt in my mind that some greenkeepers will lose their jobs through redundancy and as long as the employer acts in accordance with the law then there is nothing anyone can do. I also see some golfing establishments closing down over the coming years, there are simply too many golfing facilities in relation to the number of players. There is a drive by the game to recruit and retain golfers but in reality this is not having much effect.

It seems a gloomy outlook for the next 10 years and 'where do we go from here?' you might ask. I believe that there still are opportunities for BIGGA and that while there is no doubt that it is not going to be easy, I remain positive in my thinking both for the Association and for its members.

As you will read elsewhere in this issue of Greenkeeper International, the Board has approved draft proposals on the inclusion of groundsmen within the Association that will be put to the members at the AGM in January. BIGGA has come from traditional roots from a very traditional thinking industry, it must now think wider than golf and look at developing into the key body for those people employed in the Sports Turf industry.

Working with the Greenkeepers Training Committee, and in fact as part of its Board structure, we have made the greenkeeper education system the envy of many other industries, both in the UK and overseas, and have created a model that they strive to emulate.

As an example of this I am hoping that very soon we will be in a position to announce the launch of an industry specific national qualification that carries the logos of the Association, the GTC and its constituent members.

If the members approve the change in the Constitution then is there any reason why BIGGA and the GTC, working with key industry partners, could not develop Aldwark as the National Centre for Sports Turf?

During the coming weeks you will be reading and hearing much more of the proposed changes to YOUR Association and I ask you to consider very carefully the consequences of not embracing a change that your Board sees as being in the best interest of you and your professional organisation.

Your support is vital to the future success of your industry, think back to yesteryear and then hopefully realise that we must move with the times and embrace change not resist it.



SCOTTISH REGION - AYRSHIRE

Hello everyone, hope you are all well and have not succumbed to pneumonia or any similar condition due to the ridiculous summer weather! Can't wait for winter as it has to be better than our previous weather, surely?

Went to the doctor because I thought I had that SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) but he told me I was just depressed because the weather's crap?

On the bright side, we had good weather and a great time meeting up with the County Down Greenkeepers, at The Pines, on September 19, for our annual match, now in its third year. Although the recent wet weather left the course soft in places, the greens were firm and dry - a credit to Duncan and his staff.

At our third attempt the Ayrshire Section, lads prevailed 5 1/2 to 2 1/2. The match was played in good spirit, as always, however, it was definitely the spirits that prevailed later that evening!

I just want to thank Duncan for the use of the course and facilities and his son, Bruce, and staff for the catering at the club. I also want to thank all the players for making it such an enjoyable day, especially the lads traveling over from Northern Ireland. Thanks guys. I am already looking forward to defending the Shield across the water next year.

The following Thursday saw us at the Pines once more for the Autumn Outing and Second and final leg of the Daval sponsored Harry Diamond Jug. Numbers on the day, it must be said, were disappointing especially considering we'd had a dry week and weather on the day was glorious. There was a great atmosphere in the club after the golf and I am sure those present had a good day.

Alec really must learn some new jokes though! Only kidding buddy! Again our thanks to Duncan, Bruce and the staff there for keeping the beers and soft drinks (was still not feeling too good from weekend celebrations!) coming and for serving up some delicious food.

Results were as follows: Harry Diamond Jug - M. Lothian, 64pts. 1.1. R. McBeth, Pines GC, 33pts; 1.2. R. Adams, Turnberry GC, 28pts; 1.3. S. Higgins, Ardeer GC, 27pts; 1.4. G. Morrisson, Largs GC, 27pts. 2.1. M. Lothian, Turnberry GC, 31pts; 2.2. D. Gray, Pines GC, 27pts; 2.3. P. Tulloch, Irvine GC, 25pts; 2.4. G. Ross Royal, Troon GC, 24pts.

Trade Prize - Peter Boyd, BIGGA Regional Administrator.

Recently, not for the first time, I have become aware that some members feel they get little or nothing out of their BIGGA membership apart from their monthly magazine, which on the whole doesn't justify their subscription. While I can understand why some may feel this way, I believe one must look at the bigger picture to Membership. The management of BIGGA from HQ, Board of Management, Regional Administrator's, through to Section Secretaries and Committee member's are, I believe, all working for the advancement of greenkeepers by showing the profession to be pro-active in its approach to among others, educational and environmental issues. The Association shows the greenkeepers' commitment and allows us to take our rightful place as an integral part of the golf industry.

I like to think of membership in terms of those immortal words of John F. Kennedy who stated, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but, what can you do for your country!"

Bye for now

Denis Tweddell (denis.t@hotmail.co.uk)

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CENTRAL

Along with many other people in the industry, some of us were at Dunbar Golf Club on September 19 for the Graham Wood Charity Day. Graham was Head Greenkeeper at Dunbar for many years until he had a stroke over a year ago and has been unable to return to work. Dunbar Golf Club organised this day for him which took the form of a Pro/Cel Am with two shotgun starts at 8am and 2pm. There were various auction and raffle prizes and they raised a considerable amount of money for Graham and his family. The course was in excellent condition although needless to say, the central Section never won a prize!

As I write this, the weather has at least turned drier if also a little colder. At St Andrews, Carnoustie and Kingsbarns, the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship is being staged and it has been pretty nippy first thing, as staff go about preparing the courses.

I am sure most thoughts have by now turned to renovation and winter work programmes. Following such a wet summer aeration is probably more important than ever, yet I have heard stories of how, because green fee income is down, some clubs have decided to cut spending and contractors coming in to carry our aeration work has been dropped. Amazing! On the Strathtym Course, at St Andrews, we hired in contractors with Dryjects to aerate our greens in September. Like a hydroject, a nozzle injects water at high pressure into the greens, but in addition, sand sucked into the hole immediately afterwards and leaves the surface fairly smooth. The sand has to be kiln dried and we used a tonne per green. Along with the machines coming from Portugal and having to close the course for a day, the operation wasn't cheap but the finish was much better and far less time consuming than having to brush sand down a hollow core or vertidrain hole. There should be some pictures on the website: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Some of us from the area were fortunate enough to be invited to Castle Stuart, near Inverness, at the beginning of October, for a game on the new course there on one of their preview days. It will prove to be a stunning golf course with tremendous views over the Moray Firth. Mark Parsinen, the owner, Stuart McColm, Chris Haspell and their team have made a fantastic job with the build and grow-in and it will prove a very popular venue when it opens in July 2009.

Gordon Moir



EAST

I start this month's report on a sad note with the news that John Eadie, the former Head Greenkeeper at Bathgate Golf Club, died on September 17 after a short illness, he was 67.

During the years I knew John he was always the perfect gentleman who was well respected and liked by all who knew him. He is survived by his wife, Anne, son, Colin, and daughter, Lorna. Our thoughts are with them at this sad time.

The much-delayed East Section Outing was held on October 9, at West Linton Golf Club, and the following report is courtesy of Tom Murray.

The results: Scratch: Kenny Mail, West Linton, 73pts (Stewarts Quach).

Best Nett: Chris Yeaman, West Linton, 79-12-67 (Watermation Bowl). 1st Class: Winner: Keith Burgon, Goswick, nett - 70 (Thorntrees Cup). Runner

up: Stuart Ferguson, Dundas Park, nett-72. 3rd: Tom Murray, Ratho Park, nett-72

2nd Class: Winner: Chris Yeaman, West Linton, nett - 67 (Russell Cup). Runner up: Robbie Murdoch, Dundas Park, nett - 75. 3rd: Colin Irvine, Muirfield, nett - 72

Veteran: Alastair Holmes, Seahouses, nett - 72. Trade: Stuart Clayton, Scotlube, nett - 72 (Daval Bowl). Best Newcomer: Benn Macleod - nett - 76. Nearest Pin: Alister Holmes. Long Drive: Ian (Tiger) Lauder: Thos. Sherriff's. The Booby Prize: Tom Brannan.

Thank you to West Linton Golf Club, Chris, and his staff, the course was in excellent condition - well done guys.

I had the privilege of playing golf with our Chairman, Stuart Ferguson, who taught me some new golf shots out on the course, he is a very modest chap but will give golf lessons at a good rate!

It was nice to see some "auld faces" from the past, namely Jimmy Neilson, Jackie Dalrymple and George Stavert.

Last but no means least, a big thank you to our BIGGA Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, who is always on hand to help out - thanks Peter.

On September 19, the Graham Wood Charity Golf Tournament was held at Dunbar Golf Club. A total of 52 teams of four participated with two shotgun starts at 8am and 2pm. I understand from those participating and from my own observations that the event was extremely well organised and went like clockwork from start to finish. The buffet in particular was extremely well received, although I reckon George Thompson had my share as well as his own! With the Golf Event and Silent Auction which followed, a substantial amount of money was raised for Graham and his family.

Until next month
Mike Dooner



NORTH

First things first this month, the Chairman of the Section pulled me up at the last meeting about my use of the word 'veteran'. He says that he is not a veteran. You either are or you aren't. There are other names that could be used such as 'senior' or 'old timer'. What do you think he should be referred to? Feel free to get in touch with me about it and maybe I could include them in the next edition, if they are printable!

I received a phone call from Dale the other day to say that two of his staff are getting married. I asked him if George and Patrick had rekindled their relationship but unfortunately, he said no. He did however say, that Joanne O'Neill and Matthew Smith had got engaged. On behalf of the Section, may I congratulate you and fore warn you that the whole Section is expecting an invite! Well done.

By the time you read this Section news, the AGM will have been held at Meldrum House. I'm jealous I wasn't there but hopefully there were quite a few faces, as we had a good response for the Kirriemuir outing. The day at Kirriemuir was fantastic, I think you will all agree.

The results are as follows: Nearest the Pin: Winners John Geddes, Kevin Spowart, Chic McDonald. Sweep: 1. Matty Smith 2. Ryan Stott 3. Hugh McLatchie 4. Kevin Spowart.

Guest Winner: Derek Bond Snr. Trade Winner: Kevin Brunton BIH. Committee Trophy: McLatchie. Veterans: 1. McLatchie 2. Jim Macormack. Apprentice: Mark McLaren. Class 3: 1. Surpise McLatchie 2. John Geddes 3. Josh Lester. Class 2: 1. Ryan Stott 2. Kevin Spowart 3. Paul Sharp. Class 1: 1. Headgreenkeeper at Kirriemuir 2. Kevin Fowler 3. Patrick Wood. Scratch: 1. Matty Smith 2. Neil Sadler. The winner of the Mark Main Trophy (Best Nett



Around the Green

over the 2 outings) with a combined score of 141 was Mr Robert Patterson of Royal Aberdeen. Well Done.

The weather on the run up to the outing had been pretty miserable. In fact, the day before the competition the course was closed. When we played the course on the Thursday it was in tip top condition, despite the terrible weather, so full credit to Jim and his boys for being able to put on a display like that for us. Can you call off the lynch mob now Jim? Thanks.

It has been brought to the committee's attention that there are still a number of trophies missing. If anyone has any of the following trophies can they please get in touch with me on: 07813889374. The Toro Trophy, The George Hamilton Trophy, Trades Trophy and the Apprentice Trophy. Thank you.

It is on a sad note that I report the death of Gavin Cameron, who was an Assistant Greenkeeper at Royal Aberdeen for over 11 years. Gav left the club in 2007 to work in the oil industry. It was while working in Baku, Azerbaijan, that he tragically died in September. He proved to be a very capable greenkeeper and hard worker. He liked a laugh and was very quick witted with the general banter. His passion was "The Dons" and there were many a good debate in the bothy. The staff at the club were stunned to learn of his death and on behalf of the Section and the Royal Aberdeen, us boys pass on our sympathy and condolences to his family and partner, Kara.

You as members of the North Section can now read about our own news on the BIGGA website. If you put in your membership name and number and then go into the members page, look at the column on the left, there is a new section called Your Pages click on it. Then click on North for our Section and this will let you into our new site which Dale updates on a regular basis, it is full of information and pictures.

Any news for the next edition please drop me a line.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links GC



WEST

Well, still no change in the weather, it was disappointing that September's forecast was good but the warm weather didn't arrive.

A warm welcome back to Ronnie Myles who has returned north after a couple of years working down south, Ronnie has taken up the post of Course Manager at Buchanan Castle Golf Club - the Section wishes you all the best in your new post.

This year's night out will be held at the Curry Karaoke, on Friday, November 28. The price will be £25 per head, this includes a 5-course meal, karaoke and disco until 1am. Come along and have a great night, tickets are going fast so please get in contact to snap one up, the venue is in Elderslie Street, Glasgow.

This year's autumn outing was held over Elderslie Golf Club, it was a fantastic day with 45 in attendance. Jonathan Clelland and his team did a fantastic job, as the weather the previous day was horrendous.

Many thanks to the Captain and committee for the use of their course, we would like to wish you all the best for your centenary next year. Many thanks also to the bar and catering staff, as the service was first class. I would also like to mention the west Section Committee for all the hard work carried out arranging these outings.

The prize winners on the day were: Scratch - Allan Syme; 1.1 Callum Morrow, 1.2 Jonathan Clelland, 1.3 Gerry Bruen; 2.1 John Barr, 2.2 Sandy Brolley, 2.3 Colin Kennedy; 3.1 Kevin Cross, 3.2 Craig Drummond, 3.3 Michael

Maxton. Trade prize - Jim Smith, Visitors prize - Peter Boyd, Apprentice prize - Andrew Orr. Well done to all the prize winners.

This year's Norrie Whytoch Trophy was held over Auchterarder Golf Club and for the first time the West Section won - well done to the team Douglas Macintosh, Brian Hillan, Allan Reid and Allan Syme. Well done to Archie Dunn and his team for the first class condition of the course, thanks to Peter Boyd for his hard work arranging the day and to Kenny Liddell, from Bayer, for their continued support.

A first class day was had by all at the recent Graham Wood testimonial day held at Dunbar Golf Club. The Section would like to wish Graham and his family all the best during his time of recovery a substantial amount was raised on the day well done to all involved.

On the education front we will be arranging a seminar for spring next year with a range of topics, also a trip to Marr Hall to see how the course has developed in the grow in.

On the training front GOSTA training, situated in Glasgow, offers a wide range of courses to suit all areas of our market you can get in contact on 01415563999.

Well that's all for now see you next month

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NORTHERN REGION - NORTH EAST

Hasn't he done well - that's James Leighton, formerly a work colleague of mine at Hexham GC - James who had worked under the supervision of Head Greenkeeper, Mal Lathan, for nearly three years gaining his NVQ levels 2 and 3 before moving onto Slaley Hall. There he worked with then Course Manager, David Cuthbertson, who has since moved on to Rockcliffe Hall - I believe he had tried to persuade James to move with him but he had declined the offer, as he wanted to stay at Slaley Hall to gain experience for the forthcoming seniors tournament. Along came Steve Cram as the new Course Manager, gave James further training and the insight of preparing for a major competition.

Well it looks like its paid off, as James applied for a job after the Seniors, with Wentworth GC, had the interview and accepted a job as Assistant Greenkeeper - he started there on September 29 - now that's ambition for you knowing that you are prepared to move away. He has followed in the footsteps of three other greenkeepers from the Section that have moved south in recent years, those have been: Ed McCabe and Paul McDowell, both from Seaham, and Craig Handyside, from Gosforth. All I can say James is best of luck, and enjoy.

Well other news is that with all the rain we had many courses suffering with flooding. Take Rothbury having five feet of water through the clubhouse and workshed, resulting in all their machinery becoming totally submerged and the likes of Arcot Hall, Ponteland, having been closed for days with flooding, and Tyneside having the same problems but only playing 16 holes as their 17th and 18th have been closed. I have never seen so much surface water on those fairways, the drains just could not cope and the pond at the 2nd is still a lake. Let's hope the winter is going to be kind to us for a change.

Barry Wilson, from Stocksfield GC, rang me to say he had been involved in an accident while riding his scooter resulting in him being hit by a car and ending up with a broken leg. I told him to get in touch with the Legal Helpline as by the time you read this he could be claiming monies for being off work, although it's not a great deal but it can work out quite a bit



depending how long you're off also anytime spent in hospital you will be paid for. All I can say Barry is "Get well" it has been a while since you have played in a Section event.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTH

It's now the end of the golfing season and yet again, the leaf collecting has begun. Did we even have a summer this year? I have just returned from a short break in Scotland and unbelievably we got caught in a blizzard. That's right, snow in September. That's bad, even for Scotland! If we are in the grips of global warming, I wouldn't mind seeing some of it!

While I was getting my bits frozen up North, this year's Autumn Golf Tournament was taking place at the fantastic Alwoodley Golf Club. I have heard that the course was playing very tough and looking at the scorecards my sources were correct. A huge thank you to Phillip Taylor, and his team, and everyone at Alwoodley for a superb course and great hospitality. I must also thank Ed Carter, and the Scotts Company, for their sponsorship of the day. The winners were: Division 1.1 Dave Collins 1.2 Dean Gosney 1.3 Rob Gee. Division 2.1 Frank Stewart 2.2 Steve Trowlesdale 2.3 Paul Danskin. Division 2.1 Richard Smith 2.2 Peter Colley 2.3 Ken Christie. Trade: 1. Glen Baxter, 2. Mel Guy. Nearest The Pin: Derek Chew and Dean Gosney.

While on the golf front can I remind you all that this years winter golf and AGM will be held at Halifax Golf Club on Thursday, December 11, teeing off at 10am. Can you please let me have your name and entry fee in plenty of time (at least a week).

I will finish this month by congratulating Simon Rothwell on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper of Marsden Golf Club. I'm sure you will all join me in wishing Simon good luck in his new position.

Adam Speight
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CLEVELAND

The Section Autumn Golf Tournament was held at South Shields Golf Club on October 1. I feared the worst as the weather on the Tuesday was horrendous and my thoughts were with Phil and the lads trying to set the course up for the 'Experts' the next day. I needn't have worried as the weather on the Wednesday was sunny and breezy and the course was superb. We know that we always say that the greens were good as a matter of courtesy but the greens were fantastic. Many congratulations to Phil and the lads. A good turnout of 18 golfers and everyone who played was extremely complimentary with their comments about the whole course. Those of us who dined were very impressed with the food - top quality and plenty of it too! Thanks go to the catering staff especially from Fat Boy SlimFat (Pembo). Results of the straight Stableford tournament were as follows:

1. Phil Hargrave, of South Shields GC, (local knowledge?) 39 pts. 2. Mark Cooper, South Shields GC. 3. Pembo. Ian Stuart, Seaton Carew GC, whacked the 'Longest Drive; Richie Hood, Houghton-le-Spring GC, was 'Nearest the Pin' and Ian Pemberton, Cleveland GC, was the best on the Par 3 holes. Jamie Applegarth, of Rigby Taylor, was victorious in the Trade section just pipping Alistair Whitby, Lloyds Limited. Well done to you all.

Speaking of Rigby Taylor I would like to sincerely thank Jamie and his Directors for sponsoring the day. Over £500.00 worth of prizes were provided by them and this added to an already fantastic day. On behalf of

the Cleveland Section - we thank you!

Other nice prizes were supplied by Aitkens, Tacit and Turfcare Specialists. Thanks go to you too! A final thank you goes to Tony Burge, Richmond GC, who guarded the prizes, collected the money and the cards. The pair of us chatted about several topics. Tony recalled some of his tales about his time in greenkeeping - very funny. I told him to write a book. We also put the world to rights!

The next golf outing is our 'Bring A Bottle Christmas Day' at Cleveland Golf Club, on Wednesday, December 3. Tee off 10.30 until 11.30 with a maximum of 30 places. Please book a place with Pembo on: 07791 695 768. A tenner up front must be sent to Ian before the day. His address is 6 Rosewood Court, Marton, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS7 8QR. Ian will not accept money on the day! Be warned! We had a great day last year so get there this year! Pay up now and don't forget your bottle!

That evening is the annual turfcare 'Greenkeepers versus the Groundsmen Quiz' at Mount Oswald Golf Club, South Road, Durham City. Starting at 7.30pm - it is a really good night. TSL buy your first drink on arrival and feed you half way through. We also have a few questions, some daft games and lots of laughs. Just turn up and enjoy.

Hoping to see you all at these events.
Terry Charlton (07831 214879 with any news)



SHEFFIELD

Welcome again everyone, time really flies when writing these Section notes it doesn't seem two minutes since I was writing the last notes.

The Sheffield Union greenkeepers competition was recently held at Doncaster Golf Club and a fantastic day was had by all who attended. I would like to give a big thanks to all the Greenstaff at Doncaster for the excellent course they provided. The competition was won by Darren Coop. Well done again Darren.

I have recently received correspondence from headquarters informing me that all Sections have been given a space on the BIGGA website. This space can be used as a newsletter to inform members of section events. I will update this space soon. There are links on the website directing you to our page. If anyone has anything they would like on this page then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Unfortunately that is all from me this month, I hope you all have a good November and I will speak to you all again in December.

James Stevens
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NORTH WALES

Hello again North Wales! It's at this time of year I wish I worked on a links type course, I personally am getting a tad fed up with going into work and finding another six foot of leaves to be shifted off the course - I don't know who suggested that the way forward is to remove coniferous plantations in favour of native deciduous but I'd like to shake them warmly by the throat!

The Autumn Tournament and Section AGM took place at Upton Golf Club on October 8 and a full write up on the day and results will be posted in December's 'Around The Green' column.

The Christmas tournament is only around the corner taking place this year at Prestatyn Golf Club, on December 3, this day is normally well attended



Around the Green



so get your booking forms in early! I am also sure Dave Parry will give us a course we can all be jealous of on the day.

It's normally at this time of year that Andy (Acorn) Cornes reminds people that are staying at Harrogate to make sure of their room reservations as they might find that they're sleeping under the stars if they don't! Talking about Harrogate it has been suggested that the bus that the Section runs every year to BTME be changed slightly to either leave earlier, so we have a more reasonable length of time at the show, or even change the day to Wednesday instead of the usual Tuesday - member input as to your preferences to your local committee member.

We are very short on local news this month, so short in fact that I actually don't have any at all! Please help me out with some local interest news for next month, email and phone numbers appear at bottom of this column.

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MIDLAND REGION - MIDLAND

Our autumn event was held at Fulford Heath GC and despite the never-ending rain we have all had to cope with this year, the course was in fine fetal. Our thanks to Kim and his fine team, oh and Billy for producing the course so wonderfully. The results of the day were: 1.M. Hughes. 2.D. Fellows. 3.A. Foldes. 4. R. Beacham. 5. S. Scott. 6. L. Swann. 7. S. Thompson. 8. G. Turner. Our thanks to Campey's Turf Care for sponsoring the main prize table. Nearest the Pin: M. Hughes and Longest Drive: S. Thompson, thanks to Sherriff Amenity. Also thanks to Turners for refreshments around the course. We also held our AGM before the evening meal; your committee is to remain as previous with the additional welcoming back of Andy Smith. There were no comments or questions raised from the floor or by proxy. Our greatest of thanks to Fulford for affording us such a wonderful day, and I didn't realise that there was a portrait of me garnished with a couple of black swan quills in the clubhouse.

Congratulations from the Section, and all the lads at Wrekin Golf Club, to Andrew Dalton and his lovely bride Kelly Vaughan, who were married at the end of August - a wonderful honeymoon was spent in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. However, I hear Andrew may require a change of underwear following a water-plane flight to the island. All the best mate and congratulations on your Deputy position down there in the south.

What's this I see on this month's calendar page, the 17th at Penn with mist crawling out of the dell, our Chairman must have had an art attack. Our thanks to Whitemoss for sponsoring this month's page - for you rootzone etc needs visit www.whitemossec.co.uk

The Christmas tournament is to be held at South Staff's Golf Club on December 3, with tee times starting at 10:30am and a full English breakfast from 8:30. The cost being £25, also a 'bring a prize/receive a prize' of £6 will help all to enjoy the day. It is hoped that Peter Baker (ex. Ryder Cup Vice Captain and European Tour Pro) will be giving an after dinner speech and a Q & A session. However, such is dependant upon Peter's commitments. If he is unable to attend then a comedian will be employed.

Just a note to say the trip to John Deere Headquarters has been re-scheduled for December 11.

Looking forward to seeing you at South Staff's and wishing all a Happy Christmas.

Sean McDade

EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all,

Firstly, this month I have to mention something that I forgot to write about in last month's magazine.

On August 23, members of our Section were invited to go behind the scenes at RAF Cottesmore to watch the work done on the Harrier Jump Jets. This was organised by Steve Hopkins who works on the aircraft as well as looking after the 9-hole golf course on the base. The day began with a talk by a couple of pilots about the work being done out in Afghanistan, talking about what the conditions are like and the sort of missions they are involved in. This was followed by a tour of the workshops where Harriers are completely stripped down to their shell and rebuilt with new wiring, guidance and weapons systems. It makes taking cutting units apart look like child's play!

The afternoon consisted of 18 holes of golf played over the 9-hole course built on the base. Steve Hopkins had the course presented in excellent condition and many good comments were received on the condition of the course especially with the limitations he has to work with.

The golf was followed by an excellent meal served up in the Officers' Mess, where beer was also available for £1.20 a pint, bless Her Majesty and her armed forces.

Many thanks go to Steve Hopkins and everyone at RAF Cottesmore for allowing us in to visit and putting on a very interesting, informative and enjoyable day for everybody.

September 24 was the date of our annual match versus the Secretaries' Association. This years venue was Radcliffe-on-Trent Golf Club. The day was well supported by greenkeepers (and a few trade ringers) and secretaries alike. Many thanks go to all at Radcliffe for their hospitality. The match was won by the greenkeepers by 4 ½ pts to 1 ½.

October 2 was our autumn Texas Scramble golf event and Section AGM held at Belton Park. The golf day was very well supported and played on a golf course in superb condition, especially given the weather the day before. Many thanks to Gary Poole and his staff for the course presentation and to all the catering staff for the excellent meal afterwards. The day was sponsored by Colliers and the halfway house provided by Supatee.

The results were as follows: 1. A. Walker, G. Poole, C. Chamberlain, B. Robinson; 2. S. Beverly, R. Moody, S. Calvert; 3. G. Merrison, C. Wilkinson, P. Fell

The AGM followed the meal and was attended by roughly 25 people. All reports were well presented by the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. Several changes were made at committee level, they are, Russ Moody replaces Les Howkins as Vice Chairman after Les moves down south. Bruce Hicks replaces Rob Welford as Section Secretary after Rob decided to step down after three years in the job. Steve Hopkins has taken up the vacant position on the committee.

It was also decided to increase the cost of golf days to £20 for everybody from next year. This is because the increase in costs at golf clubs means we currently make a loss on several golf days. It is also aimed at bringing more money into the Section so we can provide more education and training for our members.

There was also a debate over the number of golf days we currently have, some people thought that we have too many, with work commitments meaning not everybody can attend every event. It was decided that as most of next years fixtures are booked that we would carry on as we are but will review it next year at committee level.



Congratulations are to be passed on to Russ Moody and Rob Bemment, who have been awarded a two-night stay at Harrogate Week 2009 for services to the Section throughout the year. This year the room is kindly sponsored by Gary Cooper, of STG Amenity Supplies.

Ending on a sad note, I would like to pass on condolences from everyone in the East of England Section to Chris Wilkinson, of Lincoln Golf Club, on the sudden passing of his father. Our thoughts are with him and his family at this difficult time.

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club
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www.eastofenglandbigga.com



BERKS/BUCKS & OXON

November! Doom and gloom, credit crunch, rain and a soggy pot noodle, are things looking up? Most certainly.

Described by the club as "one of those odd stretches of land intended by nature for a golf course, but hitherto unrecognised", it had poor shallow sandy soil of little agricultural use where gorse and heather were indigenous and where stone and peat had been extracted. It was, in fact, a veritable golfer's paradise.

The Annual BB&O meeting will be held this year at one of the finest courses throughout the British Isles to boast 54 holes of championship golf.

On November 20, The Blue Course at Frilford Heath Golf Club will be the venue for the Turkey Trot and AGM, the club has offered us there facilities to host our event and this year celebrate its centenary - a perfect chance to test your skills at this prestigious golf course, so if you have yet to fill out your entry form don't delay get it in quick.

Congratulations to Tim Jenkins, from Chiltern Forest Golf Club, who has just started his first job as Head Greenkeeper at Princes Risborough Golf Club in Bucks.

Bob Wilson has been at Princes Risborough Golf Club since 1992 and has been seen casting his spell at many a BB&O golf day over the years. Bob will remain part time at the club and promises to visit the Section events in his retirement. Have a great retirement.

If you have any news or views do not hesitate to get in touch, see you all soon

Mark Day
mark.day@tacitgolf.com



MID ANGLIA

Twenty-seven golfers competed for the summer tournament held at Silverstone Golf Club. Credit must go to Steve Cherry and his team for producing the golf course to the highest standards despite the poor weather conditions (how many times have I written that this year!) and our sincerest thanks to Silverstone Golf Club for hosting us. Sponsor of the day was Tacit and many thanks to Mark Day for providing the prizes. Thanks also to the other trade members for supporting the day.

In what turned out to be a very hotly contested competition, Steve Cherry emerged triumphant to take first prize with 37 pts closely followed by M. Lambert, 36 pts, on countback from third placed Gavin Simkin also on 36 pts. Miles Wood and Frank Whittle were 4th and 5th respectively on 35 pts and the trade prize went to none other than Simon Banks on 34 pts. Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive were both won by Martin Turbayne.

The next golf event will be the Turkey Trot to be held at Dunstable Downs Golf Club on Thursday, December 4. Please get your entries of teams of four in as soon as possible as it is always a popular event. Meetings are in the process of being arranged for 2009 and details will follow as soon as venues are confirmed.

If you and your respective clubs would be interested in hosting a future event for the Section, please let a committee member know. We are extremely grateful to the clubs that host the events and without their support it would be difficult for us to organise regular competitions.

On the training and education front, the Section plans to hold a First Aid at Work Course for AP1. The course is to be held in January over three and a half days, with a further half-day of examinations/assessment, at Berkhamsted Golf Club. The course will be subsidised by funds for education and the end cost will be around £110 per person. There are only 10 places available so if you are interested in attending please contact Gerald Bruce by emailing: gerald@berkhamstedgc.co.uk places will be given on a first come, first served basis.

Various spraying courses are also being organised for February and dependent on interest PA1, PA2 and PA6 courses will be covered. Again, these courses also attract some funding. Additionally, if there are any other relevant courses or qualifications that members would like to undertake please don't be afraid to ask. You've guessed it...gerald@berkhamstedgc.co.uk

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



SOUTH EAST REGION - SURREY

Tuesday, September 23. I'm writing this very early, for tomorrow I'm off on my holiday to the island of Elba and I hope that by the time I return, in two weeks, you will have looked at your atlas and found where Elba is so that you can tell me where I have been. Bonaparte spent some time there a few years ago so if it's good enough for him it must be far too good for the likes of me.

We played for the Cresta Cup, at Richmond GC, on September 18 and their new course manager and new Surrey member, Les Howkins MG, had the course in excellent order. The weather was dry, warm and sunny and had it not been for my tennis or golfers elbow - I don't know which and neither does my doctor (his excuse being that he doesn't play any sport) - I am sure that my score would have well exceeded the 24 points I silently suffered for. But enough of me, I do hate it when people go on all the time about themselves, the result was, after some embarrassing mix up with the cards: 1. Dan Nordsworthy, 2. Derek Cunliffe and 3. Jim Russell. Sorry to Stuart Clayton for losing, what should have been a prize-winning card.

The result of the Surrey v Essex v Sussex golf match at the Dyke GC, on September 26, will appear in the December edition as will the result of the England v Scotland match at Hankley Common GC on November 5. There's sure to be some fireworks to look forward to in this annual friendly get together.

The Surrey Turkey Trot (team event) is at Betchworth Park GC, on December 11, followed by the AGM. Any questions for the committee need to be received, in writing, two weeks prior to that date.

Well that's all folks, apart from reminding you that by the time you read this my holiday will be well and truly over.

Brian Willmott



Around the Green



KENT

Hi guys, firstly a brief report on what had to be one of our best days out ever at North Foreland Golf Club. Personally, I have never played a course presented so well in this country ever. Many congratulations to Dan McGrath and his superb team on the course condition and organisation of the whole day to a meticulous standard. Even the weather stayed fine for us and Vic Maynard's refreshment wagon did a roaring trade in supplying the elixir of life to the tired and weary.

Vic's stocks on board were given the sternest of tests as our battle-wearied chairman rode shotgun on the buggy after declining to actually play golf on the day due to a recent eye operation. Get well soon mate. Think I might try something similar soon! Thanks to Vic and Ernest Doe's yet again for providing such a great service on the day. Thanks also to our sponsors for providing a few prizes that were very gratefully received.

Results as follows: 1. Duncan Kelso, 2. Darren Burton, 3. Gary Branchett, Longest Drive - Paul Wilkie, Nearest the Pin - Darren Burton, Trade Prize - Larry Pearman.

After such a great day all I can say is the hosts of our next event have a very tough act to follow...hang on...that'll be me at Birchwood!

Yes, it's that time again for our annual Christmas (sorry) extravaganza at the home of golf in North West Kent. This year's shindig should be a corker as we are hoping to introduce a couple of fun variations into the playing format on the day as well as the usual laugh-a-minute entertainment that normally accompanies these events. As usual, we shall be competing for the coveted Scotts Shield, as well as a host of other prizes. Yes, mark November 27 in your diaries folks. Please see the website for details of the day and the all-important entry forms.

We do need your confirmation of attendance/non-attendance asap please guys for the catering and also so we can organise the groupings by handicap. If you haven't done so already (thanks to those of you who have) could you please send us your email address via the contact us tab on the website which will make the whole communication process so much easier.

Don't forget our AGM shall also follow the golf at some point in the evening as well as a Christmas raffle to help smooth things over when you eventually get home!

Well I need to go and make sure my course is up to scratch for all of the discernable clientele of the elite greenkeeping fraternity.

Looking forward to welcoming you on the day guys. Best of British.

Rob Holland
kentgreenkeepers.co.uk



ESSEX

Please note this important announcement: The Christmas Team Challenge & AGM has been moved to Thursday, December 4.

The Winter Stableford at Bentley Golf Club has just taken place with a good turn out of over 50 players taking to the start line with some good scores and quite a few disasters to report - all those ditches and the odd water hazard to contend with!

Well done to Mark Stopps and his team for presenting the greens in such a consistent state and the course for its excellent condition.

Thank you to the club for allowing us to play, to the catering staff for the

meal that's got to be the best we've had this year, followed by the welcoming speeches after the dinner and the fantastic humour during the raffle, it made the end of the day a joy.

The results are as follows: Overall - Andy Cracknell, Orsett Golf Club. 1.1 Tony Barker, North Weald Golf Club; 1.2 Richard Dunmow, Channels Golf Club; 2.1 Sam Anderson, Three Rivers Golf & Country Club; 2.2 Dougie Fernie, Upminster Golf Club. Trade - Andy Turbin - Ernest Doe & Sons; Guest - P. Lewis, Bentley Golf Club; Longest Drive - R. Surridge; Nearest the Pin - Tony Barker, North Weald Golf Club.

On September 26, 10 members of the Section played in the annual triangular Section event against Surrey and Sussex at The Dyke Golf Club, near Brighton, Sussex. Sponsored by Ernest Doe and Sons the event was held in glorious sunshine, but with a keen wind that made the golf interesting. The course was in excellent condition and I for one enjoyed myself immensely. Although Essex came last we by no means disgraced ourselves. The camaraderie between the teams was great with lots of banter and good will.

The results are as follows: Sussex 294 - Surrey 288 - Essex 275.

We look forward to continuing this competition again next year in Surrey.

Entries and teams will shortly be due in for the Christmas Team Challenge and AGM at The Essex Golf & Country Club on Thursday, December 4

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

Anyone with news please contact me at essexbigga@talktalk.net or: 01206 852353/07764862337

Arnold Phipps-Jones
www.essexbigga.co.uk



SOUTH WEST & WALES REGION - SOUTH WEST

Some good news to start this month, Ian Henshaw, Paul Bishop's Deputy at Castle Coombe, has gained promotion and is moving to Mannings Heath Golf Club, in Sussex, as Course Manager. This club is a sister club to Castle Coombe and is a 36-hole complex with a prestigious hotel. Ian is moving from this area to take up this position. Paul congratulates him on his promotion and wishes him well in his new post. Ian also worked for me for a while during 1997 and I would also like to wish him all the very best.

We had a warm welcome at Marlborough for the Section Autumn Tournament and AGM on October 9.

The course was wonderfully presented, and on a beautiful, sunny, still autumn day was an absolute pleasure to play. Thanks to Mark and the team for the excellent presentation job on the day, and congratulations to Robin Greaves who displayed all his management prowess by arranging to have the greens hollow cored the week previously, and then had the foresight to book his annual holiday to ensure he was thousands of miles away! Only kidding Robin - the greens were still pretty darn good. Thanks very much to Marlborough for hosting the day - it is always a pleasure to play there. In fact, I was reminded of the mid-1970's when Marlborough was just nine holes, and the second time around was off different tees making long par threes into short par fours etc.

At the following AGM, Chris Sealey gave a very upbeat appraisal of the year's events and was very pleased with progress on education events in particular. Attendance at golf events had been down slightly, which is due in part to the difficult year and credit crunch etc, and he announced a radical



overhaul of the fixtures to try and provide new impetus for next year. We will be holding an "Away Weekend" at a South West resort club in late April, and this will replace the early tournaments. A coach will be provided - so watch this space and await announcements when the fixture list comes out.

The election of officers saw Chris Sealey re-confirmed as Chairman, Robin Greaves, as Vice Chairman and Regional Representative. This is a slight re-shuffle around the Secretary's' position, with Nobby receiving more help from Chris Sealey, with the Patronage Scheme, and Paul Worster, with communications; Tim Morgan, with Fixtures, and Roger Neale, as Assistant Secretary. Spreading the load among several other officers will allow Nobby to continue as Treasurer, and to continue to run the golf competitions and raffles etc. Other appointments were John Keenaghan, as Regional Representative; Wayne Vincent & Paul Garland, as Team Captains, and Peter Hampton, as Trade Representative. James Braithwaite had stepped down as Vice Chairman, and grateful thanks were recorded for all his efforts over the past 11 years.

Chris Sealey mentioned next year's National Championship, which is at Burnham & Berrow. He hoped that as many members as possible would find time to play and support the event, and in addition to a sponsored singles place - the Section would also sponsor a team. Roger Neale had represented the Section in this year's recent event at East Sussex National. He finished fourth in the first day's Stableford, but wasn't quite so good on the second day. Roger had asked that his thanks be recorded for the place, and Chris reminded the meeting that this was made possible by the generous support of our Patronage Partners.

Paul Worster thanked the members present for their support for the Education Events he had organised during 2008. This was going from strength to strength, but was only made possible by members participation. Any education can be organised - please specify what you want, and we will try to lay it on. Participation is a key word at all levels in BIGGA. It is only by member's participation that it possible to function. Paul issued a plea to all, to try to visit other greenkeepers who don't currently participate and pass on invitations to events. This would help immensely in boosting attendance.

Chris closed the meeting by informing everyone that he would personally write to all clubs over the winter, to point out the benefits and importance of releasing greenkeepers to attend events, and thanking the clubs for the support offered to BIGGA.

On a sad note, members may be aware of the recent death of Bob Gates. Bob was Chairman of the Section and of the National Association in the 1970's, and was a stalwart member of the Association for many years. He retired in 1992, and with his wife Joy, spent a very happy retirement clock and furniture making, and playing golf at Westonbirt - where he had been greenkeeper for many years. He was an Honorary Life Member of BIGGA and will be fondly remembered by many.

Finally, in my new capacity as helping Nobby with communications, you will find I prefer to use email extensively rather than write dozens of letters. I have email addresses for a good number of Section members, but could I ask the following.

Please - if you have just started using email, send me your address. If you change your existing ISP (Internet Service Provider) and get a new address - likewise please send it to me - in fact everyone, just send me a quick email now - do it tonight - you don't even have to say anything other than including your name, but it logs your address onto my system. The rest is then easy. In addition, if I send you an email, just send me a quick reply - that means I know you've received it. There is likely to be one postal mailshot only next year, which will contain the Fixture List. It will then be up to you to get in touch with Nobby to register for events. All details will be provided - I am sure we will get used to it. This will considerably reduce the admin burden and allow us to function more efficiently.

All details, Fixture List, and reminders etc will be sent out in late winter.

Paul Worster
01453 837355
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



SOUTH COAST

Hi folks, as I write this report it is the week of the Autumn Tournament at Salisbury & South Wilts so I hope you have all enjoyed the day.

I have had my holiday and had a great time - want to see my white bits?!

Alex Macombie can now be contacted via Facebook and we all hope he and his family are doing well in Denmark, we hope to see him at the Christmas Tournament which is being held at Tony Gadd's Barton-on-sea Golf Club on Wednesday, December 10.

Please remember that I do not run the tournaments any more, Kevin Glass, from Brockenhurst, does, he can be contact via email: glassy2003@hotmail.com or phone: 078559 053054.

If you have any news you might think useful to the Section email me at: chrismaggisturgess@tiscali.co.uk

Until next month
Chris Sturgess

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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