

Section Notes

Please email your notes to
scott@bigga.co.uk
by the 5th
of the month

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



Scottish Region

East



Well Christmas is almost upon us, I hope that we have all have started our Christmas shopping to beat the mad rush.

November was our Section's AGM held at Gogarburn Golf Club in which we had 24 members in attendance, double last year's AGM numbers.

We firstly would like to thank (The Fairways Group Ltd) who kindly sponsored the day for us. Ian Bridges and Euan Thomson, from Fairways, gave a short talk on a brief history of the company and the up to date machinery they supply together with the online parts service they give to customers. All was very interesting to our audience who were very appreciative of their knowledge.

Our Chairman, Stewart Crawford, along with Peter Boyd, Regional Administrator, then went on to present our Section Patrons' Award winners who were Alistair Holmes, from Seahouses GC, and Douglas Greenshields, from Eyemouth GC. Well done lads, enjoy Harrogate we look forward to reading their report.

A stop for buffet lunch then on with our AGM in which some very good points were brought to the committee's attention from the floor. As there were no office bearers stepping down from there posts for the coming year our committee stay at status quo.

The committee reads as follows: Chairman, Stewart Crawford; Vice Chairman, James Neilson; Secretary/Treasurer, Stuart Ferguson; Education, Tom Murray; Match/Handicap, Robbie Murdoch.

We then got ready for the action on this tricky 12 hole golf course! With the weather holding out for us we set off for the 1st tee. I was late on the tee but found that I was then playing a fourball. I took control and thrown the golf balls up for partners, I got lucky and drew the Head Greenkeeper, from Gogarburn, Bob Marshall a "Big Hitter" and with his local knowledge we were in with a chance of winning this one, the stakes were high at a pound a head all to play for.

We surged ahead with some great play our opponents Rigby Jim and our Secretary, Stuart Ferguson, had to concede to the better team. Thanks for the ball marker, Stuart, I will keep this for another day when you might win it back.

There were other BIGGA members who were also playing for Jimmy Neilson's Trophy that he kindly donated to the East Section to play for on AGM days. The format of the competition was Stableford over 12 holes, winner takes all.

Winner: Tom Murray, Ratho Park: 25 pts. Other Scores. S. Ferguson, Dundas Parks, 24 pts; J. Darling, Aitkens, 23; D. Greenshields, Eyemouth, 21; R. Marshall, Gogarburn, 21; A. Holmes, Seahouses, 20; R. Murdoch, Dundas Parks, 19; J. Smith, Rigby Taylor, 18; B. Hudson, Ratho Park, 15; S. Crawford, North Berwick W.L/14

D/Q. C. Yeaman, West Linton; K. Mail, West Linton; B. Peters, Ratho Park. They did not sign their cards.

A big thank you to Gogarburn for hosting the event and also to the Head Greenkeeper, Robert Marshall, and his green staff for presenting the golf course in excellent condition. Our Chairman brought the day to a close wishing everybody a safe journey home.

Have a Merry Christmas and a good New Year.

Until next year
Tom Murray

Central



The Section held their AGM on 26 October where the turnout was slightly disappointing. A quiet affair, it was reported that the Section membership stands at 239, a decrease of eight on the previous year.

Gordon McKie was re-elected as Chairman and during his report paid thanks to Brian Heggie who is standing down from the Committee as he is taking up a new position in the south of England. Those present wished Brian all the best on his move and I am sure that is echoed from all who know him. Derek Robson was re-elected as Vice Chairman and Andy Mellon as Secretary/Treasurer. The Committee remains the same with the exception of Brian standing down and his place has been taken by Charlie MacDonald, of Crieff GC. The Chairman also thanked all of the patrons for their continued support.

On the morning of the AGM, the Section held a successful training course on disciplinary procedures which again had a slightly poor attendance. Our thanks go to Jason Rudgley, of Pitchblue, who delivered this on a very professional but relaxed manner.

Unfortunately, due to the poor interest shown, the committee felt it had no option but to cancel the two day environmental course planned for Gleneagles on November 17 and 18, which was going to be staged in conjunction with the STRI and Gleneagles Hotel. The lack of support and commitment from members for any course we have

tried to stage over the past three years which would cost money has caused the committee to rethink its strategy and in future we will likely stick to only staging the free evening seminars where we can utilise particular speakers who may be coming to the area. For more formal training such as the disciplinary course, we will work in partnership with the Club Managers Association of Europe.

The Spring outing in 2010 will be held on the Eden Course at St Andrews in early April, more details of this and other matters on the website, www.bigga-centralsection.co.uk

Gordon Moir

North



I hope everyone is well and you are not working too hard. The weather has taken quite a sharp drop in temperature. The winter greens haven't been used with us just yet but probably by the time you read this they'll have had their fair share of play.

Since the last news we have held our AGM. This was a golf day out at Cruden Bay GC on October 15 and was very well attended. There were 30 members there and a big thank you to Alistair and his squad for all your efforts on the day. The format for the day was a Stableford and the results are as follows:

Class 1. 1. Chris Pearson; 2. Robert Hardie; Class 2. 1. Raymond Warrender; 2. Niall Bruce.

The final 200 Club draw for the year was drawn and the results are below.

£30 winners. Stevie Frost, J.C MacIntosh and Judith Paterson. £100 winner Fraser Downy

Well done to you all. The lads at Peterculter are all expecting you to stand your hand at

Christmas, Fraser!

The Patron Award winners were also announced. This year they are Patrick Wood and Josh Lester, from Newmachar GC. Well done and I hope you enjoy your trip to BTME for the show in January. The Patron Award goes to the two people who have supported the Section the most over the past year. It involves attending the outings including the Scottish National Tournament and various seminars including the Scottish Conference in Dunfermline. You are scored on a points system and the two people with the highest amount of points win the trip to Harrogate.

Next year's outings have been decided as well with the Spring outing being held at Deeside GC on May 20 and the Autumn outing being held up at Huntly on September 16. In between these dates is June 17 - it is our Section's turn to host the Scottish National and it will take place at Murcar Links GC. Forms for the two Section outings will be sent out in plenty of time. The National forms will be available at the Spring outing.

There have been comings and goings on the North committee. Hugh McLatchie has stepped down as Chairman and has been replaced by Robert Pater-son, from Royal Aberdeen. Also joining us on the committee is Ross Macrae, from Huntly, who will be helping out at Section outings and hopefully answering any queries that you may have.

That's enough of me yapping now and I suppose I should wish you and all your families a very Merry Christmas and that your staff nights out are full of the usual wit and banter. Any stories much appreciated.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links
07813889374

Northern Region



North East

On October 14 we held our Autumn golf comp for the first time at Wearside GC and what

a pleasure it was to play there. Credit has to go to Malcolm Harvey, Head Greenkeeper, and his staff, for the condition of their course - a pleasure to play on especially those true and fast greens considering it was raining and a heavy dew hanging about all over the course they putted very well as all the greenkeepers commented on them been so good.

On behalf of the Section we would like to thank Wearside for giving us the courtesy of their course and thanks also to the catering staff for the excellent meals.

The main sponsors of the day were Lloyds of Throckley, with the backing of Toro, but let's not forget our other sponsors who look after us twice a year regularly and they are as follows:- T.S.L (Terry Charlton); Rigby Taylor (Glen Baxter); Sheriff Amenity (Paul Fosten); Aitkens and Tacit. Thanks lads once again.

Now for the leading scores

RansomeCup.nett G.Morgan, Crook GC, 75-4=71 (BIH) J.S.Richardson. Salver Gross. A. McLure, Whickham, 74.

Greenlay Cup Nett 10 - 18. S R. Pope, 91-16=75, Tyneside GC;

Ransome/Jacobsen Shield 19 - 28. P. Vinton, 105-22= 83, Heworth GC;

J. S. Richardson, 80-9=71, Hexham GC; R. Black 82-8=74, Westerhope GC; J.Gibson 77-3=74. Trade Prize. G. Baxter, nett 75, from S. Holmes, nett 83.

In all a total of only 16 people turned up pretty dismal but so was the weather, so let's hope for better turnout for 2010. Hopefully we will be playing around more courses in the Newcastle area for the next couple of years or so.

Other news about is that another greenkeeper is about to retire this December and that's Ronnie Reid, of Prudhoe GC. Have a good retirement, Ronnie, no doubt we will still see you at the Section comps.

If you remember I mentioned that Jordan Gibson, from Northumberland GC, was playing in the National Championship at Burnham & Burrow. Well he didn't win the comp. but picked up the prize for longest drive. Well done Jordan better luck next year. Well I think that's all for this month. Don't forget I

need more news to put in the reports. So if you have any let's hear from you.

James Richardson



North Wales

Season's greetings to all of North Wales Section, Christmas is soon on our doorstep and a new decade only around the corner. We've had a great day at Caldy GC on November 26 in the Christmas tournament and AGM. Details of competition results and AGM will be posted in January's column.

A seminar will be held at the Welsh College of Horticulture, Northop, on December 9, the topic being the benefits of reel grinding including a demonstration of grinding equipment the seminar will be given by Bernhards so "reel" (pardon the pun, I just couldn't resist) experts in the field of grinding. All enquiries to Jez Hughes. We're looking to run a coach to Harrogate in January but the trip will only go ahead if there are enough seats booked, this year the big suppliers are at the show and it should be a good one! All enquiries about seat availability to Jez Hughes.

Next year's tournament venues have been set up and a nice group of courses we're going to be playing or in my case visiting with Caernarfon taking the spring, Mold hosting the autumn and the Christmas tournament being held at Mile End seriously nice courses for us to enjoy there!

In other news, Jeremy Hughes, of Vale of Llangollen, reaches a milestone birthday this month, finding it hard to believe that life really does start at 40. Oswestry Golf Club had a famous visitor earlier this year, when Sugar Ray Leonard played the course. Gareth Woosnam offered him to spar a round or two but luckily for Gareth the only round Sugar Ray was interested in was a round of golf.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this last 12 months of around the greens this is what this column is all about, sharing our news with each other, we may not meet

often but we are all North Wales Greenkeepers.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year..

Pete Maybury
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Johnny Evans
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Sheffield

We once again have reached the end of the year and the time for the festivities to begin.

I hope that the year has been a successful one for you all despite the difficulties we have all faced in this economic slump! Let's hope for an upturn in 2010.

On the Section front I would like to thank all the committee members for all their hard work over the last 12 months. It takes a great deal of effort to the run the Section and without a hard working committee it would be impossible. I would also like to thank all our sponsors for their continued support and help in enabling us to run golf and lecture events.

The results of the Christmas competition held at Rotherham GC will be in the January issue.

Unfortunately that is all from me this month. I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

James Stevens
jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com

Midland Region



Midland

I bet you that Scott Mac-Callum (G.I.Editor) could not believe that I actually sent in last month's notes on time as such is as rare as hens teeth. Thus I was not able to report the result of our long running annual match against the East Midland Section played at Trentham Park. Such was for the fifth year running a loss to our team, obviously we spent too much

time working! Our thanks to T.Cheese/Rigby Taylor for their continued support of this long running event, and a well done to Course Manager, G. Cunningham and L. Swann (Dep.) and the team for providing such a lovely course. Looking forward to next year's battle, gentlemen. However, one of our players did break the golden rule of etiquette by having his phone on during his match, apologies were made and reason given. Such being that the player was awaiting notification of the arrival of his first granddaughters following a testing pregnancy. Thankfully all has gone well and Howard is now to be known as the very proud "Grandfather Middlebrook" Congratulations to all mate. Did you get discount on two Moses Baskets?

Our Autumn event was held at Burton On Trent GC. The course was presented wonderfully by the fine efforts of Course Manager G. Robson and his ever suffering team. I just wish that your YTS. had been a little more adventurous with the pin positions! Our thanks to Burton for affording us the use of their course and the very fine welcome "a welcome on the mat indeed".

The winners of the day were: 1. L. Swann; 2. R. Beacham; 3. E. Stant; 4. P. Mills; 5. M. Hughes; 6. G. Robson.

Our thanks to Campey Turf Care for the sponsorship of the main prize table. Kev and Rob/Turners gave us their usual banter at the Halfway House, and both Farmura and Sherriff Amenity sponsored the four N.T.P.'s such going to: P. Woodham, S. Mucklow, J. Ganley and D. Clues.

Once again our thanks to Burton G.C. for their hospitality and for affording us the use of their fine Club House for our AGM.

On the point of the AGM, such will be minuted and delivered for approval next year. However, as a point of reference I shall now deliver that as stated at such by myself.

"I have been the Section's Secretary for eight years and would like to thank those that have given me information for Around The Green. However, over the last 18 months I have not been able to attend any Section meetings and Andy Smith has kindly filled in for me by taking

the minutes. Which means that realistically Andy has served as the Section's Secretary and is indeed such.

To this end, I feel that he should now be recognised as the Section's Secretary. Andy has asked me to continue writing "Around The Green" so as to lower his workload, to which I am happy to do. Such of course means a change of post to myself, such being your new "Events Reporter"- No real change then! So please continue to supply me with you news for Around the Green. I thank Andy for taking over the roll and wish him every success as your new Secretary. I hope that you shall service Andy with the same generous complements and support as I have fondly received.

Just one very important thing remaining, our calendar sponsors for this month are T.H. Whites. Please consider them for your machinery purchases and maintenance requirements.

www.thwhitesgrasscare.co.uk

Wishing all a Merry Christmas.

Sean McDade



East of England

Hello all.

Firstly, it has been pointed out to me that I forgot to thank our sponsor for our July golf day at Boston West. The sponsor for the day was Toro and their dealer Chris Sellars. Many thanks to Nigel Lovatt, Chris and Toro for their support on the day and their continued support of the Section. My apologies.

September 23 was our annual fixture against the Secretaries' Association. This year the match was played at Boston Golf Club. Many thanks to Bruce and his team for the fine presentation of the course and all the staff at Boston for making us so welcome before and afterwards. In a turnaround from the previous few years the match was won by the secretaries 5.5 to 2.5.

October 14 was our annual Midland Region Inter Section Match. The match was played at Burghley Park Golf Club and many thanks go to Dave and

his team for the condition of the course and all the staff for making everyone so welcome. Also thanks to the sponsor of the event, Simon Banks. This year we were represented by Rob Bemment, of Immingham Golf Club, and Rob Welford and Ash Cox, of Cleethorpes Golf Club. There must be something in the northern air as our three triumphed in the competition for the first time since it was begun a few years ago.

Following this on October 15 was our annual AGM and golf, this year held at RAF Cottesmore. Many thanks to Steve Hopkins for downing tools on his Harrier Jump Jet to get the course in excellent condition for us and also to the staff in the "Officers Mess" for making us so welcome during the day. Also thanks to Mansfield Sands and Alan Martin for sponsoring the day. On the day the golf was won by Gary Salisbury, with Steve Hopkins second and Ash Cox third.

Our final Golf day of the year will be at Seacroft on Thursday, December 17, teeing off at 10am. A nice warm calm dry day has been booked, however Skegness at Christmas could be a bit wild, so come prepared! This day is a Pairs' Competition drawn on the day. However, this year if you want to you will be allowed to bring your own golfing partner along with you for the day. This event is our Christmas bring and win, were everyone is asked to bring along a present worth no more than £10 and they will all go into a draw so everyone will leave with something.

It has been a very enjoyable season of golf played on some excellent courses some of which we have been to before and some new venues. I think all the fixtures are now booked for 2010 however if anyone would like to put themselves forward as a venue for 2011 then speak to Bruce or Allan. We have seen a number of new faces this year as well as the regulars. It would be nice if we could get more people to come along to our golf days next year, however it is appreciated that it is not always possible, especially in difficult times.

All that remains now, amazingly, is for me to wish everyone Happy Christmas and all the best for 2010.

Many thanks

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club
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South West and South Wales Region



South Coast

Hello and welcome to December's Around the Green, and thank you Mr Hogarth for the dynamic introduction last month. It's funny how some nicknames just stick. Robert has already explained what has been happening at committee level, so I won't bore you, however by the time you read this, you should have received your entry form for the Turkey Trot which will be held at Hockley Golf Club on Wednesday, December 9.

Please could you return them as soon as possible to Kevin Glass, his address is: Kevin Glass, Keepers Cottage, Brockenhurst Manor Golf Club

Sway Road, Brockenhurst, Hants, SO42 7SG. Tel: 01590622643

We hope that going back to this entry form system will encourage people back to our golfing days and to be a bit more organised ourselves. This should mean a start sheet will get to everybody who is playing. So finally please come and support our day!

On the golfing front may I take this opportunity in thanking every body concerned with the National Championship held at Burnham and Berrow in October. It was a fantastic tournament and the turn out was excellent. Congratulations to Derek McJannet, from Matlock Golf Club who produced two brilliant rounds of golf. Also a big thank you to Richard Whyman and his team for producing such an excellent course.

A great day out was had by all as the South Coast team took on the South West boys at Chippenham Golf Club. On what was a glorious day we managed to lose the match by three games to two games it was

a closely contested match with an outstanding contribution by Chris Bitten who managed to win his match all on his own. My thanks go to Chippenham golf club for courtesy of the course, the catering staff for an excellent meal and finally Chris Sealey and his team for producing such a great golf course.

On the Groundsman front I had the unexpected pleasure of being invited to Aston Villa Football Club for their match against Chelsea on October 17, which included a tour of the stadium and a good look at the pitch. I must say that the quality of the playing surface was outstanding - shame Chelsea couldn't play on it. We lost the game 2-1, but joking apart the quality of playing surfaces around the country is testament I think to how far we have come in the industry. Twenty years ago you struggled to find grass on a football pitch. Especially in the winter!

I would just like to thank Alan Warner and Garry Worrell, of Sports Equipment, for inviting me to Villa Park and to all the Grounds staff, who I think do a tremendous job.

On that note it just leaves me to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Next month's guest columnist will be Fred Deamon, of Alton Golf Club. So from Agadoo, or even Cooperman!! Many Thanks

Phil "Joe" Cooper



South Wales

Hope you are all well.

Firstly I'd like to report on the recent Autumn competition and Section AGM which was held at Southerndown GC. The AGM passed off peacefully with Julian Bartlett Jones acting as MC. Main points of interest were that Gareth Knight, Head Greenkeeper, Trefloyne Golf Club, was voted on as Chairman of the Section, Paul Handy, Head Greenkeeper Newport GC, was voted on as Vice Chairman and Tony Horne, Inscapes, becomes Section President following the resignation of Henry Stead. Good luck to you all in your new roles and a special thanks to Henry for all his hard work that

he did for the Section during a tough time for him personally. Henry you are a top man!

The golf teed off at 1.30pm in beautiful sunshine and the competitors were treated to a golf course that was in sublime condition and was a credit to Head Greenkeeper, Andrew Mannion, and his staff. The course was tough but fair and only punished bad shots (which is why I spent more time in the bushes than Ron Davies.) Results were as follows:

1. Darryl Bray, Morryston; 2. Iain Grant, Brynhill; 3. Leigh Davies, Morryston.

Longest drive was won by Darryl Bray

Nearest the Pin was won by Andrew Hatcher, Coed Y Mwster.

Trade/Guest prize was won by Majid Maher, Captain, Southerndown GC.

At dinner we were treated to a superb meal, followed by the prize giving. We were given an update on the preparations for next year's Ryder cup by Celtic Manor's Director of Golf, Jim McKenzie. Jim also asked that if anyone was interested in a once-in-a-lifetime chance of being part of the Greenkeepers Support Team for the Ryder Cup and hadn't already put his/her name down then please let Steve Chappell know and he will forward your name to Jim. A list of successful applicants will be produced in the spring.

Jim also informed us of the unwelcome news that the start times of the Ryder Cup have been brought forward from 8.15 am to 7.45 am. Sunrise is at 6.45am. So things will be pretty tight!

Thanks go to Southerndown Golf Club for allowing us the use of the course and the club's facilities; to Andrew Mannion and his team presenting the course in such a superb condition, to club Captain Majid Maher for attending; to Jim McKenzie for coming along to talk to us; to Gwyn, the Steward and the catering staff for the superb meal and hospitality; to Steve Chappell for organising the event; to Jane Jones our Regional Administrator for joining us for the day, and finally to Jon and Ben Morgan, of Keith Morgan Mowers, for sponsoring the day and for the great prizes. Thanks again for your support.

On October 7, 22 people attended the Syngenta/Scotts



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

The recent spate of heavy rainfall and the subsequent flash flooding does make you wonder what the future holds for us as far as any climate change goes.

Perhaps I'm getting old but years ago I do not remember such events happening with such regularity, then again maybe my memory is just not what it used to be! I sympathise with those victims of the floods who have lost homes, businesses and worst and saddest of all, their life. All too often we take what we have for granted and still want more, perhaps we should stop more often and spare a thought for others.

In the office it's full steam ahead with plans for Harrogate and bookings continue to come in for exhibition space. As I write we have only a limited amount of space still available and hopefully by January this will have been sold. The workshops and seminars are receiving a great deal of interest and the whole event is shaping up to be the morale booster that we all need. The Golf Club Management Partnership (the alliance between BIGGA, GCMA and the PGA) continues to move forward and through regular meetings we are identifying areas of potential collaboration, in due course we will be in a position to release more detailed information. I attended the recent GCMA Conference and was hearted by the support that they had from their membership but also by the interaction between all the bodies represented.

Looking forward we are working on an update to our Business Plan and are preparing budget projections beyond 2010. As we all know the golf industry is changing and it is difficult to predict just how this will affect the Association. One thing we do know is that from here on it is going to be harder to make ends meet as budgets throughout the industry continue to be cut. The prospect of a General Election next year does nothing to boost the country's optimism for early signs of 'green shoots of recovery' but it is important that we remain positive and look for solutions. When I look at prize money such as that recently picked up by Lee Westwood in Dubai I wonder how long, if ever, it will be before the golfing industry realises that more funding is needed at our end of the game. Despite their best endeavours both BIGGA and the GTC struggle to balance the books but without these organisations where would the future of greenkeeping and golf courses be? I look forward to debating some of these points at the meeting of Regional Administrators and Section Secretaries that is to be held at BIGGA HOUSE at the end of November.

On the bright side it will soon be Christmas, we will pass the shortest day and can start looking forward to shrugging off any feelings of Seasonal Affective Disorder that we may have! Since this is my last column of 2009 I wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope that 2010 proves to be a healthy and successful year for one and all.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive

Rescue seminar at Ashburnham GC. Interesting talks were given by Nick Martin, of Scotts, and Dr Simon Watson, of Syngenta, on the new Rescue product for the control of Ryegrass in turf. Lunch followed (I can certainly recommend the curry!) and then a course walk where Huw Morgan MG, Course Manager at Ashburnham, showed us areas that had already been treated. Results were impressive. Particularly on Yorkshire fog. The big talking point however was the badger damage on the course. Some areas of rough were decimated with badgers digging up areas looking for chafer grubs. Huw is really gutted by the damage and the fact that he can do little about it. As you know Huw, I have been in this business a long time and from my extensive knowledge and experience I know only one sure way to stop badgers digging up a golf course.....Confiscate their spades!

Joking aside, a big thanks to Huw for helping to organise the event, to Nick Martin, from Scotts, and to Dr Watson, from Syngenta, for giving their presentations and to Ashburnham GC for the use of their facilities and great hospitality.

Later that afternoon/evening The South Wales branch of the IOG organised an evening lecture at the new Cardiff City stadium, home to the Bluebirds (and also some veteran rugby team who also wear blue.) Head Groundsman, Phil Williams, did a 'walk and talk' on the pitch then gave a talk with the aid a video of the pitch construction from start to finish. A good turnout of Groundsmen and Greenkeepers were treated to an excellent talk and a very enjoyable evening.

The RT Matchplay Trophy now, and at the time of writing I heard that Darryl Bray/ Leigh Davies recently beat the Newport team of Mark Wilshire/ Mark Anderson to reach the final which was played at Tenby on Friday November 13. A full report in next month's Around the Green.

Darryl Jones, of Glynneath Golf Club, spoke to me recently about a possible 'Jolly Boys Outing' to either Swansea or Cardiff on International day. Not sure whether this involves a few glasses of Pimms and some cucumber sandwiches while watching the rigger or a great

day/night/morning on the lash! All interested parties can have a chat with Darryl at the Christmas comp at P & K. Talking of which...

The Christmas competition will be held at Pyle and Kenfig GC, on Friday, December 11. You should have received an invite in the post. If not then please contact Steve Chappell. The day will again be sponsored by Vitax and Joe Crawley, UK and Europe Sales Manager for Vitax should be in attendance, so thanks in advance to them. Please bring a prize for the usual short but sweet raffle.

Hope you all have a great Christmas and prosperous new year!

Ceri Richards



South West

Hi everyone, well this is my first Section letter. So here goes.....Firstly I'd like to introduce myself to you. As many of you may already know I work at Minchinhampton Golf Club and have done for the last seven years, being first assistant for the last two. During this time I've been taking part in most Section events. But hey, that's even about me for now, I'll have enough time to bore you all about my stories in due time.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the new 2010 BIGGA Chairman, Paul Worster the very best for his year. A message from all the guys at Minch.

Just recently there was a manual handling course. This took place at Cotswold Hill G.C and Bath G.C. Dave Bowles, who works for the health and safety department, took the courses. I attended the one at Cotswold Hills with Wayne Vincent and his guys. The morning was very useful; it was full of ways to lift items and solutions on how to avoid lifting unnecessary. Most importantly remember - "Bend your knees and not your back".

Bunkers, let's talk about them for one moment. Almost everywhere you go they are talked about (second only to greens, of course). Though I bet bunkers could be taking up as much of your time. Just think of the jobs we have to do on them, raking,

fixing washout, topping them up, edging and if you're working at Minchinhampton, include using the sandstorm. What a machine that is. For those of you who are unaware of it, it's used to sift the sand, removing the stones and any other unwanted material that has contaminated them over the years. Yes the machine works, the sand left behind is almost as good as new. Richard Louisson, Head greenkeeper at Cirencester Golf Club kindly showed a number of us from Minchinhampton (which included our Green Chairman, Stuart Massion) around his course. Richard shared with us his experience from renovating his bunkers. At Cirencester they are changing all their bunkers "in house". They are changing from having high faces to now having grass faces with flat bases. These bunkers looked fantastic, and what's better the cost and they are much easier to maintain of them are kept to a minimum. Richard many thanks for showing us around, and I must say your course (and bunkers) looked in great condition!

Recently the South West played its Section match against the South Coast. A huge thanks to Chippenham Golf Club and Chris Sealey (with his staff). Chippenham stepped in at the last minute to host the fixture. Although the South West won the fixture three matches to two, I do feel as though Chris Bittin, South Coast Secretary could have had just as an enjoyable afternoon than the winning captain Wayne Vincent. Chris played on his own against Wayne and Co-captain Paul Garland in this "now famous" match, winning 2 & 1.

Harrogate Week is not that far away from us now. The Region has a coach going up, which is at the same cost as last year. There is also a sponsored place which is free. If you would like the opportunity to have this free place please send a letter to Chris Sealey, at Chippenham Golf Club, stating what you would hope to gain with your visit to Harrogate.

Guys, please feel free to contact me with any news/information you would like to share with everyone else. I wouldn't want this to become a report telling you about the day to day running at Minch. I look forward to

hearing from you all. My e-mail address is Adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk

Adam Matthews

South East Region



East Anglia

Newmarket Golf Club was the venue for our ecstatic Band of Brothers and Claire. We had to restrict the numbers to 68 - yes restrict to 68. I do hope other people read this because we must be the biggest and best run Section in the country.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, or should I say racecourse, we had a smashing day. The course was in excellent condition thanks to Rob and his team. I don't know what he did to the 1st or 16th greens, but whatever it was, it worked.

As usual the glory boys were back in town.

0 - 9 Handicap: 1. Norman Fenwick 34 pts. 2. Mark Henderson 34 pts. 3. Ben Wallis 34 pts. 10 - 18 Handicap

1. Aser Barber 33 pts. 2. Glen Rayfield 31 pts. 3. Brian Lemon 30 pts.

19 - 28 Handicap

1. Richard Mitchell 31 pts.
2. Adrian Goode 30 pts.
3. John Morley-Smith 29 pts.

Guests: 1. Chris Pearson 35 pts. 2. Phil Armitage 34 pts.

Trade: 1. Mark Keyser 39 pts. 2. Andrew Kirley 35 pts.

Nearest the pin on the 3rd - Mark Henderson. Nearest the pin on the 12th - Nick Ashman. Nearest the pin on the 14th - Bohan Penywrot

Longest drive was Ben Wallis.

Unfortunately, Rob Boyce put the yellow tees where the white ones should be, therefore, was the only candidate for the loo seat which he gratefully accepted. He is the last name on the seat - it is now full, figuratively speaking!

The main sponsors of the day were Tomlinson Ground Care. The other trade members who have supported us admirably over the years are as follows:- Bartram Mowers, Aitkens, Ben Burgess, Tacit, Textron, John Deere, Hayter, Rigby Taylor, SISIS, Toro, Collier Turfcare, Leyley, Baileys, Sherriff, Vitax

and Earnest Doe.

All the prizes were presented by Dave Tyres, the Club Captain, and we thank Newmarket Golf Club for their hospitality. A truly memorable day.

Mick Lathrope



Kent

So here it is Merry Christmas!

At the time of writing this report our annual extravaganza of Turkey Trot and AGM at Birchwood Park is yet to come but eagerly anticipated by a remarkable number of early entrants. I shall take that as a compliment, Thank you.

One of the items that will have been discussed at the AGM, which was highlighted in a separate letter sent to all of you with the agenda, was a notification that we are actively seeking persons to help us organise educational events and training courses for you all wherever demand exists. I sincerely hope that we are able to find a willing soul, as providing relevant and current training for you all is one of the fundamentals of each Section remit.

Much education comes by way of effective communication. This is something we have recently improved significantly by launching a re-vamped website at www.kentgreenkeepers.com I am on a very steep learning curve on running websites so please excuse the odd area that requires improvement. I wanted to get something out on the net as quickly as possible in order to facilitate direct interaction. More will follow and on a regular basis.

One thing that is a priority for me on the webpage is an area where we recognise the invaluable generosity of our sponsors. At the moment we have listed who they are but I shall, when I learn how, provide a link via their logos to their individual websites. Meantime, thanks to all of them for their support and patience! I sincerely hope you will be able to provide similar support for us next year.

Please understand that this is your website. I really do want your input regarding news and pictures. Given the right regular

information I think we can make it relevant, useful and entertaining.

Lastly, it is Christmas time and the end of another year so I won't go on but I would just like to say to our regular attendees, on behalf of Kev and me, thank you all very much for your support this year. The reason we continue doing what we do is because we regularly thoroughly enjoy your company at our events. You will have received your extraordinarily good fixture list for 2010 by now if you were at the AGM and I hope you're looking forward to these events as much as I am. Full details are also on the website so please make a note in your diaries. We do endeavour not to make our events infringe on the valuable work that we all carry out on our own courses by requesting first tee times at our host courses for as late as possible in order that we can fulfil our responsibilities.

If there is anything more we can do for you, please contact us via the website or on the phone, but, again, thanks for a great year and the very Best of British for 2010.

Have a good 'un
Rob Holland



Essex

This month's news is extremely short I'm afraid.



I have heard on the grape vine that Roland Hughes, Course Manager at Forrester Park Golf Club, has been ill and has spent some time in hospital, I understand he is home now and we wish him a speedy recovery.

The New Chairman and Committee will have been elected and the Christmas bash at Orsett GC will be over by the time you read this. I will have all the news and results by the next issue.

Have a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

If you do have any news for the website or for GK International, please contact me on 07764 862 337 or via email essexbigga@talktalk.net


Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer

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Dates for your diary

18-20 January 2011
24-26 January 2012
22-24 January 2013