

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, Trefloynne 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