

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



Central

Hopefully by the time you read this the weather and the season has been kind to you and everything is picking up. I know the rough really shot up on our courses towards the end of May so that's the current cry from golfers at the moment.

Communication is a funny thing, we are often accused of not giving our members enough information about what we are doing so recently at the Links Trust we started to email a database of our season ticket holders work which we thought they might find interesting and when they so something out of the ordinary they would know what it was and why we were doing it. One such email explained why we were cutting the rough back and scarifying it on part of the 17th of the Old Course. Within two hours, one season ticket holder had called the Daily Mail, but of course not with the correct facts. The result was the Mail ran an incorrect story on the Saturday and most of the Sunday papers ran the same incorrect story the next day.

At the time of writing another has contacted a golf magazine complaining because he doesn't want to understand the facts. Sometimes it makes you wonder if it is worth it.

Back on the hickory golf and some of the staff at St Andrews had an outing to the Kingarrock course, near Cupar, where, for your £20 green fee, you get a set of hickory clubs, 3 golf balls, a history lesson, a dram, ginger beer, shortbread and 9 holes of golf. Great fun, more info on

www.biggacentralsection.org.uk where you will also find Jon Wood won the winter photo competition and more details about the education courses we are running this coming winter.

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping
St Andrews Links Trust



East

I start with this month's report on a sad note by announcing the passing away of Dick Dugan after a long illness. Retired Head Greenkeeper of Glencorse Golf Course Penicuik Edinburgh and Life Member of BIGGA - Dick was a great supporter of all the golf events in our Section.

Dick was a great character in the profession and I am sure, all who knew Dick had a funny story to tell. He will be sadly missed by many, our thoughts go out to Dick's family.

Our Spring Meeting that was held at Eyemouth golf course on Tuesday, April 14, courtesy of Bob Wortley and his committee.

We were very fortunate to have good weather on the East coast and the golf course was in great condition. A special thank you must go to Mark Pagan, the Head Greenkeeper, and his staff, for the way the course was presented for us on the day.

Looking down through the prize list, the Eyemouth boys did a good job on the cleaning up of the prizes. My question is when do they get time to practice their golf, or are they just natural born sportsmen.

I was fortunate with the draw in playing with the local greenkeeper Dougie who clubbed me for most of the round. Managing to win the sweep money from the Rigby Taylor boys Big Gary

and Jim - cheers guys, I am sure you both will put in for expenses for that day.

Nice to see Graham Wood and his wife Helen at the meal, presentation of prizes and raffle, thanks Stuart for bringing both along. Our grand raffle! I think just about everybody went home with something. A big thanks to the trade who kindly donate the prizes for our raffle on the day.

We hope to see more faces at our Summer Outing The Willie Woods Trophy where members can invite a guest along as a partner, the venue for this is Kingsknowe GC.

Our tireless Secretary, Stuart Ferguson, will keep you all posted with this event.

The winners: Spring Meeting at Eyemouth GC, Scratch Winner (78) Benn McLeod, Gullane GC, 1st Class Winner (80-7-73), Tom Murray, Ratho Park GC,

R/up (85-5-78), Mark Pagan, Eyemouth GC, 2nd Class Winner (83-9-78), Douglas Greenshields, Eyemouth GC, R/up (88-13-75), Ian Watson, Gullane GC, 3rd Class Winner (92-19-73), Bob Wortley, Eyemouth GC, Veteran Winner (79-5-74), Alistair Holmes, Seahouses GC, Patrons Winner (83-13-72), Stewart Clayton, Greensman Ltd, Novelty winners, Nearest The Pin: Douglas Greenshields, Longest Drive: Mark Pagan, both Eyemouth GC.

Until next month's report
Tom Murray



North

I start this month with an apology for leaving the results of the 200 Club out of last month's article.

£30 Gary Smith, £30 Robert

Hardie, £30 Simon Hoy and there was a bit of a dispute as to who won the £100. Someone, mentioning no names, thought that it was a joint ticket and was quite rightly over the moon, until Robert Hardie confirmed that it was his partner in crime, Billy Craig's ticket. The guy in question wasn't happy but I'm sure Billy will get you a couple of drams from his winnings!

Right now that has been cleared up we'll carry on with the rest of the Section notes. I hope everyone is doing fine and you are all getting the praise that you deserve for presenting the course in pristine condition - yeah right, that will be the day. The weather has been pretty mixed over the last month but a couple of weekends ago we staged the Scottish Amateur Strokeplay and you could not have asked for better weather if you had tried...scorchio is not the word.

The Scottish Chairman is 60. Just thought I would slip that into the conversation. He had a party to celebrate at the golf club in Ellon with a great turn out and I'm sure that he raised a fair amount of money for his chosen charity. The rest of the North committee had turned up to wish him many happy returns, apart from one, his best buddy, Hugh McClatchie. It just wasn't the same without you there with your usual wit.

Congratulations to Dale and John who have been picked to represent the North as part of the Open Support Team at Turnberry this month. Well done to you both, but I can't help thinking that it will come as a bit of a shock to you, Dale, as you'll have to do something that you haven't done for a number of years...work - the lads told me to put that.

The Scottish National Tournament will of come and gone by the time you read this. I am sure the lads at Cathkin Braes would have had the course in tip top

condition. A report will follow in next month's magazine.

Finally, back to the trade's competition that is played in Aberdeen every year. As I mentioned in last month's issue - the second team did us proud, but not too proud. The first string were unlucky to get beaten by the Surveyors in the quarter finals. The teams were made up of Robert Patterson, Neil Sadler, Ross Macrae and Dennis Grant. Hard luck lads better luck next year. Hopefully we'll be able to put two teams in next year.

Ben Brookes Murcar Links
07813889374

Northern Region



North West

The spring tournament was held at the West Lancashire Golf Club with a blustery day in prospect the idea was to keep hitting the fairway off your drive, a prospect in which I failed miserably. West Lancs golf course was in fantastic condition and my thanks go to John Muir and his staff for the way in which the course was presented. John could not be there on the day due to a well-earned break but I am sure he would have been very proud at the great comments that were made on the day.

My thanks also go to the Secretary, Stuart King, and the committee for kindly allowing us to play and also to the catering and bar staff for their hard work and patience. The clubhouse has just had an extensive refurbishment and is a worthy addition to the wonderful golf course. My thanks also to Gary Potter, from A.L.S.; Peter Marshall, from Tacit, and also to Nick Gray, from Bathgates, who kindly provided prizes for the day. Now onto the winners. Best Gross was won by Gary Burgess, 74; Best Nett, Peter Hogan 67; Vets Prize, Dave Macavoy; the Guest Prize was won by Frank Melia, Longest Drive by J. McMullen and Nearest the Pin by K. Sweeney.

I know everyone will be very busy now but don't forget the summer tournament coming up on Friday, July 3 - if you wish to play in it please send a cheque for £20 to Billy Merritt - he can be found at The Lodge, Beacon

Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Billy can be contacted on his mobile: 07985175825. I can be contacted on 01512894625 or my email is: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



North Wales

I might as well come straight out with it what do you think of the new look Greenkeeper International? I think it's an improvement, but that's just my opinion.

On May 20 we played the spring tournament at Rhyl Golf Club and on that glorious spring day all 37 in our party enjoyed the great course and what was roundly accepted as some of the best greens that were around.

Results are as follows: 1st Andy Peel, Bull Bay, 36pts, 2nd Paul Gater, Caldy, 34pts; 3rd Ian Becket, Mile End, 34pts; 4th Haydon Jones, (Chirk), 34pts. Nearest the Pin went to Haydon Jones on the 7th hole and Dave Povey on the 12th hole.

The Trade Prize went to Section Chairman, Terry Adamson, with 35 points, and Best Gross went to Section Secretary, Jez Hughes with 77. Andy Peel and Jez Hughes now qualify for the BIGGA National Championship later in the year. Best of luck if you take part! Best guest went to Jim Adamson with 40 points. A great thank you goes to Ian Buckley and all at Rhyl Golf Club for an excellent day and the very warm welcome extended to us.

The annual North Wales/North West took place at Bolton Golf Club on June 20 - a full written report next month.

In local news, yes I do once again have local news! Andy Hughes, of Carden Park, and his wife, Sarah, became proud parents for the 5th time with the birth of their 1st son Emlyn who came bounding into the world weighing a bonny 5lb 15oz on April 28.

Congratulations also go to Emyr Price, of Royal Saint David's, Harlech, on achieving 35 years of loyal service to the club, not that he gets any respite for such service with a challenging year ahead the course is hosting three major events - the Ladies British Open,

the world one-armed Golf Open Championships and the S4C r.c.w. Ladies Championships of Europe.

Well I think that's it for this month, all the best until next month!

Pete Maybury petemayb66@aol.com 07756001187

Johnny Evans Johnny.evans@tesco.net

Midland Region



Midland

Well here we are again with our notes, and not surprisingly I have received diddly squat from anyone. Therefore all I have is to thank this month's calendar page sponsor, Burrows. Please consider them for your machinery needs and servicing, they can be contacted on: 0870 242 6952. Also please get your photos to Richard asap so as we can prepare next year's calendar. Please email your photos to: rich71@btconnect.com

Looking forward to reporting on the summer event results from Harborne next month.

Sean McDade



East of England

Hello all. Here we are half way through the summer already, where has it all gone!

Our May golf day was held at Elsham Golf Club. A good turnout with some new faces was pleasing to see. The golf course was in superb condition as always. The day was won by Colin Hopper, Head Greenkeeper at Elsham, no comment will be made about setting the course up for yourself and knowing how it would play! Second was Steve Hopkins and third was Adi Kitchenson. The Trade Prize was won by Carl Chamberlain.

Nearest the Pin was Carl Chamberlain and Longest Drive was Pete Watts. Many thanks to all concerned at Elsham Golf Club for accommodating us during the day. Also thanks to the sponsors of the day, F.G

Adamson & Son, John Deere dealers.

Our next golf day is at Boston West Golf Club on Thursday, July 23. Tee off is 1.30pm but arrive early for coffee and bacon rolls. Full details will be sent to you soon.

Many thanks Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club
steveimmingham@aol.com
www.eastofenglandbigga.com

South East Region



Surrey

Sunday, June 7. June's edition of Greenkeeper International has Surrey Section members dominating most features. Page 8 shows the Drift Golf Club's answer to Darth Vader demonstrating the new Greens Hover Mower and on page 34 a photo of Epsom's answer to the last of the Mohicans trying to find his Greenkeepers and showing where he buried last year's Derby winner. Page 36 shows Dave Langheim's legs.

Thursday, May 28. Hindhead GC was glorious, the greens were sensational, and the buffet was sumptuous. Steve Holmes and his crew made sure Hindhead GC were in shipshape condition and the perfect venue for this year's National Qualifier. Results: James Hunt was the Scratch winner. James Penfold, Best Nett with Gavin Kyle and Lee Blackburn, runners up. Tom Kenny, playing off 7, had an unfortunate 124 gross score, but did hit a magnificent Longest Drive. Yours truly organised the chocolate box raffle, sponsored by Tacit.

This edition's Daddy of the month belongs to Robin Jackson, Course Manager at Bramley GC. Robin fully praised his wife, Jacqui, for her part in the proceedings on April 20 and Joshua, 6 lbs. 11 oz., has been screaming about it ever since.

Those interested in my endeavours to find a holiday venue for this year must remain disappointed as no decision has been made to date, although I have been told by Surrey members on many occasions where to go. While thanking you for those suggestions, I remain.

Brian Willmott



Kent

Hi all. Finally some decent summer sunshine has graced the Garden of England and in almost perfect conditions the cream of Kent greenkeepers (and trade members) took to the rolling hillsides of Lullingstone Park Golf Course for our National Qualifying event. The extensive course was presented superbly by Melvyn and his team for the event where any scores of note were hard earned and richly deserved. Long carries over deep rough, narrow, sloping fairways and many hills to negotiate definitely sorted the fit from the fat! My own respectable front nine score was annihilated by a disastrous back nine as my energy levels sapped ever closer to critical point!

This was not helped by a very noticeable absentee on the day. On the morning of the event I was phoned by a very apologetic Vic Maynard, of Ernest Doe's, to say that his refreshment wagon, the provider of sustenance in all weathers and saviour of many a days poor golfing performance, had, unfortunately, been stolen at a golf day in Essex on the previous day! As a result, many of us simply had to admit that our game was not good enough as the usual excuse of too many trips to Vic's beverage box was cruelly taken from our armoury. So after much walking on a very warm day, the eventual winners were: 1st Wayne Syers, Lullingstone Park GC, 2nd Russ Bain, Chislehurst GC, 3rd Aaron, Lullingstone GC, 4th Kev Morris. Longest Drive also went to Aaron (apologies for not knowing your surname) and Nearest Pin to Kev Morris. Great shot mate.

As was mentioned earlier, this was also our National Qualifying event so congratulations to Wayne and Russ who will go on to represent the county at the National Championships later on this year.

Many thanks to Brian Willmott, and Tacit, for providing some great prizes and to all at Lullingstone for their hospitality. The informal barbeque in the

evening was the perfect way to relax after our expedition across the rolling terrain of the North Downs. I sincerely look forward to a return trip soon.

The next event is already upon us! On July 9 we shall be descending en masse (hopefully!) to Gary Branchett's course at Tenterden. Vic shall also be making a return with his new wagon so I'll see you there! Please see Kev's e-mail for start times etc. and this column next month for results and news. Remember that it is still only £25 for Course Managers and Trade and £15 for anyone else to play in our events so please do support them.

If anyone has any news or views they can contact me on the number below.

See you at Tenterden Best of British

Rob Holland
07843 410755



Essex

Greenkeepers were out in force at the Wentworth Club on Bunker Raking duty for the BMW PGA Championship at the end of May. Four of us from the Essex Section graced the fairways and the odd bunker. Long time stalwart of the event, Andy Cracknell was joined by Sam Anderson, plus Arnold & Mark Phipps-Jones - they all joined other greenkeepers from the Southeast Region, under Regional Administrator, Clive Osgood's watchful eye. Clive had the raking rota running like clockwork in his normal organised manner.

Great weather greeted the team and players alike. The course was in fantastic condition as always and a pleasure to walk around, with some of the best golfers in Europe. This is the last competition to be held on the old greens of the West Course. At the beginning of June I understand there all to be dug up and replaced with USGA greens, the work is planned to be completed and the course back in action for the end of the year, so we were told by Course Manager, Chris Kennedy.

I for one look forward to

walking the course and seeing the changes and hopefully not having to rake too many bunkers.

Chris Kennedy was very appreciative of the work done by the voluntaries spending a few minutes on the 18th after the prize presentation thanking the guys.

Formethenextstopis the Open Championship at Turnberry, where again I will be walking the fairways, with I hope some of the best world players and hopefully not having to put rake to sand or squeegee to water. I will give you all an account of the week in the coming months.

The Knockout draw has been made and the website will keep you all up to date on the state of play.

The Summer Trophy, at Burnham-on-Crouch Golf Club, will be well past when you read this bulletin, I will give an account of the day on the website and place a round-up in next month's issue.

The next golf event is the re-named "Essex Trophy" to be held at Canons Brook Golf Club on Wednesday, August 19. We have re-named this event, because we found we had slipped a month or two and were having the winter trophy in September or October.

If you have any news for the website or these Section notes please contact me on: 07764862337 or via email: essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer

South West & Wales



South West

Will Bowden has been in touch to discuss the latest initiative at Cannington College.

He is putting together a Water Resource Management short course of approximately six to eight weeks featuring one day's college tuition per week, which will run alongside the Foundation Degree programme next year, and is open to any greenkeeper in the South West. The start date is likely to be

around late September 2009. Will would like to gauge industry interest in this course, which will feature external lecturers such as Roger Davey and Kneale Diamond, who will help endorse and deliver the course. Successful candidates would receive a certificate, or diploma in Water Resource Management at the end of the course.

As Will says, "It should be a good course and will touch on all aspects of water use and management including irrigation, water sourcing, usage and of course legislation. I will get industry experts in to talk and deliver units that are best delivered by people in commerce and the rest will run along as part of the FDGSTM qualification. If the candidates do an assignment they will get a diploma, but if they simply attend and complete, they will receive a certificate. I am keen to build on this idea so any feedback or comment would be most welcome by email to bowdenw@bridgewater.ac.uk Costs are likely to be in the region of £100 - £200 per candidate". Please do email Will with any interest, questions, or comment.

The Section Team was back in action last week, and as I've always said "we can't lose under present Captain, Wayne Vincent". We were well looked after at Cirencester Golf Club with the course in sparkling condition, and the greenkeepers ran out winners by five matches to one (with only home greenkeeper Richard Louissou failing to ease past the winning post.) He'd obviously burnt himself out preparing the course which was absolutely perfect. Thanks to Cirencester for hosting the event, and thanks to the Secretaries for a keenly contested day out. Spare a thought for Brian Rimes the Secretaries organiser - Brian drove all the way up from Plymouth, only to play against and be soundly beaten by two blokes who live less than a mile from the course! No justice, and he was still just about smiling by the end of the day.

The next event will be the Scotts Trophy, and while I won't be there myself due to holidays, I hope it is a good and well supported day. The course at Filton is in top condition having recently hosted the County Champs so should be another successful tournament.

I was recently very fortunate to be invited to Celtic Manor to watch the Wales Open as a guest of Toro. This was a great day out, spent in the company of John Keenaghan and Wayne Vincent, and well looked after by Keith Carter, of Handy Garden Machinery. The 2010 course was in superb condition, and should be a worthy venue for the Ryder Cup.

Back in the Section, we are hoping to run further Excavator Safety Training, Safe use of Tractors and Attachments, and Manual Handling and certification courses during the late summer\autumn, and some hedge laying\stone walling tuition and demonstrations during the winter. Please do contact me with any interest as it takes time to organise these things, and it is important to have interest and volition.

There is also a joint BIGGA | GCSMA education event to be held at The Kendleshire on September 30. This day is aimed at Managing Secretaries, Course Manager\Head Greenkeepers, and Deputies and will feature practical advice on how to improve the golf club, relations with members and staff, and how to solve disputes. Full details to be circulated shortly. Please contact Bob Williams at Chipping Sodbury GC for further information.

Finally, I've spoken with both our injured colleagues, Ali Turner and Roger Neale. Ali is progressing slowly and is at last able to put weight on his leg, although he doesn't expect to be fully fit until the autumn. Roger Neale, whose accident took place only a couple of days before his wife went into labour with their first child, was reminiscing about the birth. I could only imagine 6 foot 3 inch, 16 stone Roge, in the Delivery Room, with crutches, feeling queasy, and trying to keep out of the way. I also managed to spare a thought for the harassed midwife - "Gas and Air for Mrs Neale, and for Christ' sake give Mr Neale a full general anaesthetic and strap him to that chair in the corner - if he knocks over one more sample jar with those blasted crutches, I won't be responsible for my actions".

Father and child are now doing well. Congratulations Roger, from us all.

Paul Worster



South Coast

The management trophy at Barton on Sea Golf Club was a great success resulting in Tony Gadd's team running out winners. The course was, as I expected, in superb condition and the hospitality second to none.

The summer tournament is getting closer - July 9 at Hampworth Golf Club, so contact Kevin asap. Another reminder about the autumn tournament on the Isle of Wight - remember the day is courtesy of the Section so all you have to do is get there

Until next month
Chris Sturgess



Devon & Cornwall

Not much to report this month, as I'm sitting here writing this we are getting an absolute deluge after an almost 'French Riviera' week of weather!

Let's hope that wasn't our summer.

I understand there's a Digger Training course coming up on Tuesday, August 4 at Trethorne Golf Club for 10 - this hasn't been confirmed yet but I suspect it will have by the time you're reading this.

Congratulations to the Duchy College, at Stoke Climsland, and Steve Evans for their recent Greenkeeping Seminar, which I understand was very popular with the 80 plus that attended, providing up to date knowledge from specialists from within the industry.

I hope everyone's keeping on top of the grasscutting etc, and as always if there are any up and coming events or stories you would like mentioned, please let me know.

Jerry Cole



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

At long last the question of Full Membership for groundsmen has been resolved with a resounding vote last month in favour of a change to the Constitution. However let's not run away with the idea that this will open the floodgates and an Association built by greenkeepers will be taken over by groundsmen.

There is a natural synergy between all those practitioners employed in the maintenance of sports turf and so why not share best practice, training and education? A great deal of effort is already being expended on recruiting and retaining greenkeeper members and now the challenge is to market the benefits of membership to a groundsmen audience. I wish to make it clear that we are not looking to challenge the IOG, we are merely looking to provide an alternative choice of membership body to groundsmen, who may even wish to think about being a member of both BIGGA and the IOG.

In June, Sami Collins and I attended a third meeting at The Belfry with representatives of the PGA and the GCMA when we sat down to progress earlier talks on how our three organisations can develop and provide unified education to agreed common standards, especially at management level. Skill sets that you can argue are equally applicable to other related activities. The more we talk the more we discover that we have much in common and there is no doubt that the foundations of a close working relationship have been securely laid down.

The latest set of management accounts for the Association clearly demonstrate why it has been necessary to reduce staffing costs at HQ by way of redundancies. Advertising revenue has fallen victim to the cut backs in spending by both suppliers and clubs and the green shoots of recovery in some politicians' crystal ball are certainly not apparent in golf. We are, however, no different to the majority of businesses in our downturn, we are all very aware of the current economic climate and its effect on every day life.

The incorporation of BIGGA into a company limited by guarantee is well under way. It is the intention that the new limited company will be in operation with effect from July 1, 2009 at which date all assets and liabilities of BIGGA (unlimited) will be transferred into the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.

Funding problems continue to place a question mark over the future of the GTC in its current form. This aspect of greenkeeper training and education is vital to the success of the system and rest assured that BIGGA will do what it can to help maintain its existence.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive