

attended the excellent spring seminar at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club would like to thank all the speakers who came down and gave such great presentations. Maybe many came to listen to Greg Evans talk on 'The Short Cut To Better Greens' which has created a lot of interest and asks questions of traditionally held greenkeeping beliefs, which I think is a good thing. My favourite presentation though (they were all good, mind) was the one given by Allan Patterson, of The Castle Course at St Andrews. I just found it amazing how they turned a flat area of agricultural land into a very natural looking cliff top links -not only did they create a great looking golf course but they must have ticked all the boxes environmentally as well, so that even the most bearded of environmentalists would be happy (if that's possible!) Thanks go out to Richard Blizzard, of Soil Harmony, for sponsoring the day, to all the speakers for their time, to all the people who attended, to Royal Porthcawl GC for the use of their facilities (and a cracking lunch!) and to Steve Chappell for all his hard work in organising the event.

As promised, here is the draw for the 1st round of this year's Rigby Taylor Knockout which was made at the seminar: Tony Horne (14)/Martyn David (15) V Nigel Ruck (11)/Mel Leech (12) Mark Wiltshire (18)/Mark Anderson (1) V Peter Lacey (13)/Simon Lacey (24) Steve Price (15)/John Knight (5) V Darryl Bray (9)/Leigh Davies (11) James White (3)/Wayne Benger (20) V Phil Thomas (15)/Stuart Jones (15) Steve Chappell (22)/Darryl Jones (5) V Rhys McDonough (0)/Gary Humphries (0) Huw Morgan (9)/Rob Williams (3) V Andy Roach (5)/Gareth Knight (18) Colin Thomas (15)/James Rees (18) V Steven Lloyd (6)/Mark Wells (11) Adrian Parsons (20)/Ceri Richards (18) V Paul Handy (13)/Rhys Norville (4) Marrison Griffiths (9)/Glyn Jones (5) V Jim McKenzie (9)/Alan Abel (10) - good luck everyone!

Steve has also asked me to thank the 14 people who attended the mole control training day at Neath GC recently and made the event such a big success. If you would like to attend a training day on chainsaws, abrasive wheels, tractor driving or something else that is relative to greenkeeping

then please contact Steve. If eight people or more apply for a particular course then funding can be available, so have a think about it!

Good luck to Jim McKenzie and his team for the preparation for this year's Wales Open (June 4-7) which is to be played on the Twenty Ten course. Jim is often interviewed by the press during the tournament, so whatever you do Jim, don't tell them any of your jokes! You make Chubby Brown sound PC!

Speaking of big golfing tournaments, one journalist described the Augusta course after The Masters as being 'The prettiest in the world' which prompted a response by a sports journalist from The Guardian, who wrote that the chap should go and visit St David's City Golf Club, in Pembrokeshire, before coming to that conclusion! I have to admit, I'm with the chap from The Guardian, It's only nine holes, but it is a beautiful course in a wonderful setting and John Phillips, Head Greenkeeper, produces consistently good greens. Best of all though, he makes a nice cup of coffee to enjoy the scenery with! He now has a copy of the article on the notice board in the clubhouse to remind all the members of how lucky they are!

Swansea City and Ospreys fans will be pleased to learn that Dan Duffy, Head Groundsman at The Liberty Stadium, was recently voted Championship Groundsman of the year for the 2008/9 season. Dan is one of the most dedicated Turf Managers that I know and thoroughly deserved the accolade. How he can produce such a good playing surface when both Rugby and Football are played on it (sometimes one after the other) is amazing - well done mate!

How long is your semi? That question was put to Julian Bartlett Jones by the Ladies section of Dinas Powys GC recently. Julian wasn't sure so they went out to measure it. They concluded that it could be left to grow longer to provide them with more of a challenge. When he got home and he relayed the day's events to his partner, Joanne, he found himself sleeping on the sofa! Funny creatures women! But then height of cut is an emotive subject!

Ceri Richards
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John Pemberton
Chief Executive

All members should by now be aware that the Board has called a General Meeting of Members for Tuesday, June 16, to consider, and vote on, a change to the Constitution that will allow Groundsmen who are employed in the sports turf industry the opportunity to apply for Full and Associate categories of Membership of the Association.

All current members who are entitled to vote will have received a voting form by now and these are starting to be returned as I write. Please use your vote if you have not already done so, it is your Association and this is your chance to have a democratic say in its future.

At the March Board Meeting the structure of the Sub Committees was reviewed and it was agreed that more representation from outside of the Board would be sought in order to better engage the views of the Membership. In future, meetings will be held by way of mixture of conference calls and round-the-table meetings. In addition a series of sub-groups will be formed that will liaise with the relevant member of staff by e-mail in order to identify members' views. If you would like to be considered for inclusion in either of these then please forward your name and e-mail address to the appropriate member of staff as below:

General Purposes

Chairman, Mark Dobell
Staff member, Steve Wragg
e-mail: steve@bigga.co.uk

Membership

Chairman, Archie Dunn
Staff member, Tracey Maddison
e-mail: traceymaddison@bigga.co.uk

Learning & Development

Chairman, Jeff Mills
Staff member, Sami Collins
e-mail: sami@bigga.co.uk

Communications

Chairman, Tony Smith
Staff member, Scott MacCallum
e-mail: scott@bigga.co.uk

Environment

Chairman, Paul Worster
Staff member, Sandra Raper
e-mail: sandra@bigga.co.uk

John Pemberton
Chief Executive