



## News from the Chief Executive

Having had the approval of the membership at the AGM to convert the Association to a limited company the Board have tasked me with organising the legal work necessary. I have had preliminary meetings with solicitors and accountants to establish what needs to be done, by whom and by when. It is going to be an immense task but one that perhaps should have been done some while ago.

In the past the main deterrent has been the lease on the land at BIGGA HOUSE that is held by myself and a Past Chairman in favour of BIGGA. Once incorporated, then BIGGA can hold the lease in its own right but past owners of Aldwark Manor, in whose grounds BIGGA HOUSE sits, would not approve the changes. The current owner, Q Hotels, has taken a much more positive view and has sanctioned the changes. It is likely that BIGGA Limited will commence trading on 1st July and in conjunction with the accountants I am looking at the viability and advantages, if any, of splitting the commercial activities from the membership based activities and perhaps applying for status as a charity. We are hoping to maximise the revenue and minimise the tax burden!

The Board at its next meeting in March will be looking to fix a date for an EGM with a view to progressing its proposals for the better integration of sports turf groundsmen into BIGGA. Now that the Constitution has been changed to allow for voting by proxy everyone will have the opportunity to influence the future of their Association. We all acknowledge that there are still a great many greenkeepers who are not members and this we will attempt to address over the coming months. It is a matter of fact, however, that a lot of these non-members never will join for a variety of reasons. They have no interest in belonging to a professional association, they do not value being a member, they do not play golf or, perhaps, they are not interested in the more formal training and education that helps career development. It is also a matter of fact that in a commercial world it is numbers that count and BIGGA needs more members to be able to progress.

Let us not get carried away with the notion that greenkeepers are potentially going to be swamped by groundsmen. If BIGGA widens its base to cater for sports turf in general, just as the IoG has always done, then I would see a gradual influx of groundsmen taking place over a number of years. At the moment there are many, many groundsmen who do not belong to the IoG and so perhaps we can be of greater appeal. It's not about challenging the IoG more about offering a second choice that could help secure a better future for the Association and the industry.

We have tried the merger route and that failed but it did highlight how much greenkeepers and sports turf groundsmen have in common. Let's wake up to this fact and try to capitalise on it. If BIGGA does not embrace this concept soon then I have genuine concerns that another organisation will enter the membership arena and that is the last thing we need in today's economic climate. Golf is going to be hit hard by the recession in 2009 and some greenkeepers will lose their jobs as certain clubs struggle to balance the books. There is nothing BIGGA, nor any other body for that matter, can do about this if clubs act within the law. I hear criticisms of Greenkeeper International and the lack of jobs being advertised these days. I wish the critics would realise that there is a reason for this - there are very few vacancies and even then some are being filled by referral.

I seem to be always having a moan but I find it frustrating. BIGGA has grown on the back of the development in golf over the past 15/20 years. The Association has met many of its goals but in a shrinking market with overheads increasing and a decline in revenue how does it progress? The future rests with you, the member.

John Pemberton



### SCOTTISH REGION - AYRSHIRE

Hello all, hope you're all well and looking forward to a good spring and longer hours in the sunshine?

Starting with Harrogate, I felt the show was well attended and the decision to make the seminars free a huge success. In fact, some missed out due to size of the rooms and I'm sure this will be rectified for next year. Quality and content of the seminars was high and I particularly enjoyed Colin Burns' (Winged Foot GC) and Gordon Irvine's (Askernish) presentations.

Another highlight was to see Ayrshire's own, if adopted, George Brown receive the Lifetime Achievement Award for services to the profession. George gave one of his trademark speeches and when he finished off by dedicating the Award to his lovely wife, Brenda, there was more than a few moist eyes in the room. When the photographer moved in for his shot of George with his Award, he asked George if he could "hold it up a bit", to which George quickly explained he'd had a bit of trouble with that lately!

Oh and I can't forget to mention Marshall Sloss' kind invitation to a whisky tasting event on the Wednesday afternoon in his room, with a bottle of his roommate's (Martin Lothian) Glenfiddich. Marshall assured the attendees that Martin had insisted that he could help himself to the malt, as it was brought to be drunk. This proved acceptable to us! After catching up with Martin and thanking him for his benevolence, he remarked "Aye, that's fine I was just hoping to o' been there n'aw!" or words to that effect. Cheers Dip! All in all a most enjoyable week.

Thursday, April 30, is the date for the Spring Outing to West Kilbride Golf Club. Get you're entries back to Derek sharp, as I'm sure this will prove a popular venue!

The Greenkeeper's v Secretaries Match will be contested at Strathaven Golf Club, on May 12.

The Scottish Greenkeeper's National Tournament takes place on Thursday, June 11, at Cathkin Braes Golf Club, in Glasgow. Hopefully we'll have a good turn out from the Section, as there will be a good bit of silverware to defend from the haul taken at last year's competition!

Auchterarder Golf Club hosts the annual Norrie Whittock Trophy, on August 20.

Irvine Golf Club hosted a presentation from Martin Ward (Symbio) on Monday, January 26. There were over 20 greenkeeper's in attendance and although the subject matter was academic in nature I'm sure everyone took something from it. I know I did! On behalf of the Section I would like to thank Irvine Golf Club for their support and to Martin Ward for an excellent, thought provoking, seminar. Thanks also to Jim Paton for expressing the Section's appreciation on the day.

Finally, footballers, and I use the term loosely, are required for our match against the West Section due to be played at Cambusdoon, Alloway, on Saturday, March 21, from 10am. Anyone interested in a run out can get in touch with me at: [denis.t@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:denis.t@hotmail.co.uk) or: 01292 475309.

The plan is to have a friendly, yet competitive, match, some lunch and refreshments in the clubhouse then possibly into Ayr for further refreshments and an honest explanation of where the West lads got their tactics wrong!

Denis Tweddell



## CENTRAL

I am sure you will all by now be coming to the end of your winter programmes and hopefully now be looking forward to some more better weather this coming spring. Certainly at St Andrews it has been a busy winter period with the guys having done an excellent job in re-building our bunkers in preparation for next year's Open.

My own staff and I will be heading down to Turnberry for a course visit to see how preparations are going for this year's Open. Check out the website to see how things went!

At the end of February many of the Section members enjoyed a great and very informative day at The Castle Course, where STRI held its latest seminar "The Art of Objective Greenkeeping", this was very well attended with over 50 members being in attendance, a big thanks to Richard Windows, Henry Bechelet, Andy Cole, Lee Penrose and Alastair Beggs for a great days education and also to Gary Smith, from Scotts, for so kindly sponsoring the day.

The committee has been working hard over the winter month's putting together an educational programme for the coming year and hopefully full details will shortly be available on the website: [www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk)

You will shortly be receiving our annual newsletter along with the Spring Outing invitations to Scotsraig Golf Club on April 30.

The annual Scottish Conference was held recently at Carnegie College, in Dunfermline where we all again enjoyed some quality speakers, well done to all concerned, and to Peter Boyd, for organising such an excellent day - and also to some of the committee who assisted in organisation of the day in Peter's absence.

Towards the end of March we shall be holding an evening seminar on drainage, look out for details nearer the time on the website.

Anyone with any news they would like included in the "Around the Green" Section can email Gordon Moir at: [gordon.moir@standrews.org.uk](mailto:gordon.moir@standrews.org.uk)

Gordon McKie



## EAST

I will start my report for this month by saying that the members of the East Section were pleased to hear that Graham Wood has been made a Life member of BIGGA - this was passed at the AGM at Harrogate. We hope Graham will be able to attend some of our fixtures in the near future.

Patrons' Award winners, Joe Robertson and Adam Sherwood, enjoyed

their visit to Harrogate. They both thought the exhibition hall was interesting and enjoyed meeting other greenkeepers and representatives from different companies throughout their time at Harrogate.

They attended several seminars, one on the US Open and another about aeration with the STRI, which were very good.

All the seminars were very informative and easy to listen to and understand.

Joe and Adam would also like to thank the East Section for nominating them and BIGGA for organising their package to Harrogate - all would not be possible without the patrons' backing. They sound as they both enjoyed their time at Harrogate.

After a blaze of pre-publicity, Scottish Borders councillors have finally given the go ahead for a £50 million luxury hotel development at Rutherford Castle, near West Linton.

The developers, Manor Kingdom, in conjunction with the De Vere Hotel Group, also plan an upgrade of the existing golf course to championship standards. With job losses and cuts on hours for many of our members, it makes one wonder where the customers will come from to patronise all these new developments.

In late November, Keith Purves, currently working at Kingsbarns under the expert eye of Innes Knight, flew out to commence a three month work placement at Royal Melbourne Golf Club. A Selkirk lad, Keith worked previously at both Galashiels and Melrose Golf Courses before moving south to further his career at the Forest of Arden.

Since speaking to Innes at Kingsbarns, the latest is that Keith has decided to continue working in "Aussie land" as the sun is always shining and the beaches are great!

(Good on you mate).

We are nearing the start of the golfing season for our courses let's hope the weather is a bit kinder to us this season.

Our Spring Outing to Eyemouth Golf Course is nearing so blow off the dust from these golf clubs and come along to what will be a very enjoyable day at Eyemouth - I am sure Mark Pagan and his greenstaff will have the course in good order for us.

Members, please look on the 'Region and Section Pages' (which can be found on our BIGGA website - [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) - for dates of fixtures for the east Section.

If you have any stories or information that might be of interest that we can publish on our Section news please contact me.

Until next month  
Tom Murray



## NORTH

Hopefully by the time you read this month's article, everyone will be clear of the snow and ice that has wreaked havoc across Britain. At this present time the North of Scotland is experiencing such temperatures as -15. We haven't had those sort of temperatures for a number of years. If you have been saving those painting jobs for this sort of weather then now's the time to do them. If you've already done them then you can only paint things so



# Around the Green

many times. It's that cold the water has frozen in the sheds and we have to go up to the club to get water and go to the toilet.

Everyone I've spoken to recently have said that they are well into their respective winter programmes. As I've mentioned, this depends on the weather conditions. Most clubs are managing to get out and do some bits here and there whether it be limping up trees, ditch work or general tidying up.

Congratulations go to Paul Sharp, of Peterculter Golf Club. One of my neighbours has told me that you have recently been promoted to Course Manager. Well done. This person also told me that at the same club, one of its staff namely, Warren, has lost a stone. Well done keep it up. We won't recognise you at the next outing.

Over at Meldrum House there are a couple of pieces of news. Richard Mullen and his wife, Claire, have had a second child, Lucy. I just hope you've plenty of money in the bank, Richard. Also Stu Addison and his wife are expecting their first child. On behalf of the Section may I wish you both congratulations and I will put in an announcement when the time arrives.

The Scottish Chairman, John Geddes, has asked me to thank Thorntrees Amenity and Mike Dooner for inviting himself and Robert Patterson down to the Castle Course to have a look round at the set up. John did say that he had a very nice meal and a great day. Thanks Mike, for making an old man very happy.

Dale Robertson has also asked me to thank Symbio for the seminar that was held recently at Newmachar. It was very well attended. Altogether there were 42 delegates attending so that was impressive.

It is about that time of year again when the 200 Club recommences. It is the biggest earner for the Section and is well supported, so if you get a ticket through your door then please support the Section. Thank you.

I think that's all I can ramble on about this month. I've tried to string it out a bit. I was asked to do this job because the committee thought I could spin a story. I haven't got a clue what they're on about.

Until next month...

Ben Brookes  
07813889374



## WEST

A chilly welcome to this month's report, as I look out the window snow is falling - it makes a change, we haven't seen snow for a long time.

Harrogate Week was very well attended by the Scottish Region which is a great testament during these hard times. It was great to meet up with some old pals and share a few drinks over at Christies and Wetherspoons.

I spoke to Dennis Tweedle, from the Ayrshire Section, and we hope to arrange a football match during March, so if anyone is interested give me a bell.

On a different note Derek Duthie, from Richard Aikens, were involved in car accident in January and will be off work for some time, you can still contact him on the mobile, we hope you make a speedy recovery in time for the start of the golf season.

The fixture Diary for 2009 should be out over the next few weeks so check the post to find all information for the year ahead.

One date for your diary is the Spring Outing, which will be held at Caldwell Golf Club, on May 7, so come along for a good day.

As I said in my last report, I hope to have some education days planned over the 2009 season - as soon as dates and speakers have been confirmed I will let you know through the BIGGA website: [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

A visit is planned to Mar Hall Estates, around April/May time, to see how the course is coming along before it opens later in the year, if you would like to come along you are most welcome, give me a call for details of arrangements.

On the Committee front we would be happy for some younger Assistant Greenkeepers to come forward and try their hand on committee, to bring some new and fresh ideas to our Section.

Well that's all for now, see you next month with more Section news.

Fraser Ross  
07970366355  
[karen.ross@tesco.net](mailto:karen.ross@tesco.net)



## NORTHERN REGION - NORTH EAST

Well I hope everyone who took advantage of Terry Charlton's generosity once again, by providing transport and food/drinks to BTME enjoyed themselves. Many thanks on behalf of the Section and while on the subject of Terry we have purchased a new trophy for the spring competition, which will be called the TSL. It is replacing the Quaich for Best Nett for Assistants - I think that's the least we can do for Terry and his company for all their support over the years.

Greenlay is holding an Irrigation Open Day at Heworth Golf Club, on March 18, regarding the John Deere water system, no doubt greenkeepers will be told in due course. Another piece of news, Ravensworth Golf Club purchased quite a bit of machinery from Greenlay at the end of last year, that being a new greens machine, rough cutter and a sprayer hope that quells any rumours that you have heard.

Tyneside Golf Club are in the process of changing the 15th hole, they have altered the angle of the yellow marker tee box so that it points to the left in order to stop frequently hit drives that land on the first tee, therefore making it a dog-leg to the right instead of a straight hole. Work on the right side of the hole will be taken up by planting 15 trees at four metres high, therefore forcing you to play left and hopefully making it safe for the golfers teeing off at the 1st. The trees have been carefully selected to give all year colour with the spring, there is cherry blossom followed by a contrast of bark changes with the maple, oak and other trees.

Well it looks like the recession is kicking in now and I'm afraid one or two courses are already laying off staff. I reckon any golf club that hires summer workers will be doing the same; unfortunately it will be the course that suffers, as you all know we can't do without these people. How long will this last? Looks like a couple of years - let's hope we have a drier summer.

Jimmy Richardson



## NORTH WEST

The committee has been very busy over the last month sorting out the North West and North Wales seminar and the venues for the year ahead. By the time you all read these notes they should be finalised.

The first tournament is the spring tournament at West Lancashire Golf Club on Monday, May 18 - this will also be a National Championship Qualifier.

If anyone has any news of births, deaths - or marriages or divorces for that matter - please let everyone know and get in touch with me on 0151. 2894625 or email: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



## NORTHERN

While writing this, the snow is again starting to fall as the country is in the grip of the worst winter weather for 20 years. With most courses closed for well over a week already, it doesn't look good for them opening this week either!

January 13 was the date for the re-arranged AGM at Cookridge Hall Golf Club. A huge well done and thank you to John Wilde who was the only non-committee member to turn up! It was decided at the AGM that the cost of entering all golf events will rise to £20 with immediate effect. This £20 fee must be paid by cheque, a minimum of one week prior to the event. Failure to pay will result in your place being cancelled (no exceptions will be made!).

You should all by now have received completed fixture lists which were kindly sponsored by John Dobson, of Greensman Ltd, so thank you John for your support. If you haven't received a list the fixtures are as follows: Spring Tournament - April 29 - Pannal Golf Club; Presidents Day - July 1 - Branshaw Golf Club; Sheffield Match - July 21 - Abbeydale Golf Club; Invitation Day - August 25 - Howley Hall Golf Club; Autumn Tournament - September 15 - Pontefract Golf Club; Winter Golf - December 10 - Ilkley Golf Club.

This year's Spring Seminar has been arranged for Tuesday, March 10 and will be held at Cookridge Hall Golf Club, Leeds. With the kind sponsorship of both Headland Amenity and Rigby Taylor, the theme of the seminar is "What You Need To Know About Grasses for Golf".

We have three fantastic speakers for you, namely Mark Hunt, Headland Amenity; Brian Robinson, Rigby Taylor, and Steve Prinn, Senior Sports Turf Lecturer at Askham Bryan College. The seminar is limited to 50 places and is free of charge to members of the Northern Section, including buffet lunch on the day. Anybody wishing to attend please get in touch with me ASAP.

Adam Speight 07739 319060



## CLEVELAND

Hi all hope you're well. Not much to report this month as there has not been much news passed onto me. Hope you all enjoyed Harrogate Week - a big thank you to Terry Charlton for putting on his bus again.

As I sit writing this newsletter, we are still about three inches deep in snow at Bedale and it does not look as though it is going to melt any time soon.

A couple of dates for your diary are as follows: On Tuesday, February 24, there is a quiz night at Teesside Golf Club. The quiz starts at 7pm but could all committee members be there for 6.30pm for an informal chat about events for the coming year.

David Snowdon will be giving a talk on the uses and abuses of wetting agents on Tuesday, March 10 at 7pm, again at Teesside Golf Club.

Those who don't turn up will defiantly miss a good night. David is a very knowledgeable guy and his talks are always very informative and funny at the same time, with a chance to ask questions afterwards.

The Spring Golf Day will be held at Blackwell Grange Golf Club, on Tuesday, April 7. The day has kindly been sponsored by Lloyd Ltd, our local Toro and Kubota dealer.

Tee off from 10am to 11am. The price is £14 which includes a round of golf, a meal and a raffle so come on you can't grumble with that, even in a credit crunch!

The money must be paid up front in full, a week in advance, by March 31 in order to organise the catering.

Can all entry money be sent to either Ian Pemberton, 6 Rosewood Court, Marton, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS7 8QR, Tel: 07791695768 or Kevin Scarce, 11 Stapleton Close, Bedale, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL8 2UA Tel: 07921817857 or alternatively you can give the money to Alister Whitby of Llyod Ltd when he does his usual rounds.

Cheques are to be made payable to "Cleveland Section BIGGA" Last year's Spring Golf Day was at Blackwell, and the course was in great condition, let's just hope the weather is a bit kinder to us this year.

I think Phil Graham, from Bishop Auckland, is in training to become Disney's next sleeping beauty, his training started at Harrogate where he managed 16 hours sleep. No pin pricks just beer!

John Talbot, at Middlesbrough Golf Club, is eagerly awaiting the snow to melt, he and his lads are going to be very busy with course alterations, which include three new fairway bunkers on the 2nd, two fairway bunkers on the left hand side of the 18th, a new 18th tee and finally refurbishing a bunker on the right of the 18th fairway.

Any news to: kevscarce@aol.com

07921817857

Kevin Scarce



# Around the Green



## SHEFFIELD

Hello everyone, my apologies for the lack of news last month.

As I write this news it is currently snowing – it's the second week of it now and it is starting to get a little tedious. I am sure everyone will agree the days start to become like weeks when you are in the shed all day - but I'm sure it has given us all a lot time to catch up on important maintenance work and all our maintenance facilities are immaculate from top to bottom.

Unfortunately we had to cancel our winter lecture day with Geoffrey Davison, on February 5 due to the weather conditions, although by the time you read this I hope we will have rearranged it for a new date. Also, we should have some news soon about a visit we have planned, all members will be informed about this when we have something more definite.

I also hope that by the time members read these notes the new Sheffield Section website will be at an advanced stage - as a committee we hope this website will become a cornerstone of our Section and give us a platform on which to move the Section forward. If any members have any suggestions for the website then please feel free to contact me.

We also hope to have the 2009 fixture cards out to you shortly, they will hopefully be sent to you with the first golf competition invitation. Once again thanks to Aitkens and particularly Peter Fell for producing the cards for us.

I will finish on a positive note. As you read this the winter will be behind us (fingers crossed) and we will all be preparing for our spring renovation work. This is an important time for us greenkeepers and an enjoyable one preparing the course for the coming summer months.

I hope you all have an enjoyable March and I will talk to you all again in April.

James Stevens  
Section Secretary  
jimmy\_jams20@hotmail.com



## NORTH WALES

Hello again, I hope you're all starting to get back somewhere near on track after the big freeze of January and February.

I have to start this off with an apology, I didn't get the chance to advertise the seminar at Carden Park, on February 17, because the February column went to print before the dates were finalised, to anyone who went, I hope the day was informative and helpful in any plans you might have in bunker construction or drainage work. I have to thank Carl Crocher, Course Manager

of Caldry Golf Club, and Rob Heath, of Souters Sports Drainage Consultants, for their informative and interesting presentations. I would also like to thank Johnny Evans for the hard work he has put in behind the scenes setting this seminar up, also Carden Park for the use of their facilities.

In with your fixture list and competition form you would have received a form asking for your name, contact number and email address, please fill these in and return them, the information you provide will strictly remain solely for the use of North Wales BIGGA and will not be shared with any other organisation or group. This information will help us to reach our goal of being able to email fixture lists, competition forms and other information directly to our members throughout the Section.

In other local news, once again I find myself singularly without any news. If you know of anything that might be of interest then drop me an email or text or call either contact on bottom of this column.

Pete Maybury  
07756001187  
or petemayb66@aol.com

Johnny Evans  
Johnny.Evans@tesco.net



## MIDLAND REGION - MIDLAND

Well let's hope that the Holocene period has finally ended and that a return to the pathogenic suppressing Devensian has returned, particularly considering the economic constraints that many a budget may well be imposed with over the next few years. What's the crazy fool on about now? At last we have had bug suppressing, root zone fissuring, growth suppressing/ carbohydrate saving, good hard old fashioned penetrating frosts. We have all either said or heard "what we need are hard frosts". Let's see what difference such makes to the coming year's qualities of our courses.

My apologies for the lack of notes last month, this was due to a problem with my email. Consequently I must therefore thank three sponsors of our fine calendar. January's was sponsored by Whitemoss for rootzones, turf dressings and sands; Mike Whitehouse on 07795 395 669. Web: www.whitemossec.co.uk February's was sponsored by ALS for Sportsturf Products and Contract Services (01952 641 949 www.amenity.co.uk). And finally our thanks to Osprey for your Water Management needs - 01939 236 677 www.ospreywm.com - for this month's calendar page. If you have not received your calendar via the postal sponsorship of P. McCrannor, or by the good grace of N. Tyler and T. Cheese please contact me and I shall ensure that you receive your copy of what is yet again a fine and free perk of being a member of the Midland Section. You shall also see that the Section's golfing events are listed within the calendar, and also the closing dates for entry. The reason for the closing date to each tournament is to make sure that we do not over book or indeed under book the requiring numbers. If we over book it often costs the section, if under booked it could cause disappointment, thanking you for your cooperation.

The golf is confirmed as: Spring - Wychwood Park (De Vere) May 11 at £25. Summer - Harborne July 8 at £20. Autumn - Burton October 16 at £20. Christmas - Woburn December 4 at £30. We have yet again tried to keep the cost of entry to £20 but due to the extra costs of the Spring and Christmas



events we have had to increase the cost, but surely the slight extra is still a bargain. All four venues are of the highest standard and our thanks to Rhys for securing such wonderful opportunities. Further details can be found on the fixtures card as sponsored by Sherriff Amenity/Nigel Tyler.

And finally, congratulations to Jamie Blake for his promotion to Course Manager at Broadway Golf Club. I'm sure that your father would be very proud. And should you hear on the wind Pomp and Circumstance, (in the words of the composer) "Don't be frightened, it's only me!"

Sean McDade



## EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all. Back to business again following a few days escape at BTME in Harrogate. The show seemed to be well attended despite all the problems around at the moment. Thanks must be given to everyone at Headquarters for putting on a good week of events, especially to Sami and her team for the vast array of education available which was no doubt the main focus for a lot of people during the week.

Sitting here looking out at yet more rain, with a golf course that just about has nine playable holes, I wonder how many more people are facing the quandary of keeping courses open to keep members happy and maybe scrape the odd green fee, compared to closing down and giving the place a rest for a while. Golfers tend to stay away as the rain falls, yet as soon as it stops and the sun comes out they expect the place to be open. Oh well, it will soon be spring.

By now everyone should have received a fixture card for 2009. This year it has been kindly sponsored by Aitkens so many thanks to them. Fixtures are as follows: Toft, April 22; Elsham, May 20; Kenwick Park, June 25; Boston West, July 23; Abbotsley vs Trade, August 14; Boston vs Secretaries, September 23; RAF Cottesmore & AGM, October 15; Seacroft Xmas Bring & Win, December 15.

Most of the matches during the summer will tee off at 1pm or 1.30pm, however full details will be given nearer the time. Cost this year is £20 for everyone. All golfers of any standard are invited and a draw is done on the day. If anyone is interested and has not attended before, don't be scared, we are a fun Section who will make anyone feel welcome.

Once again this year we are running our Order of Merit, again kindly sponsored by Simon Banks, along with Under 25 and Trade Orders of Merit, which will run over the first four events. We are continuing to run our National Championship qualifiers which are based in handicap classes and based on best results from three of the first four events.

One final note is to wish Eric Berridgeall the best in his retirement. Eric has been Head Greenkeeper at Orton Meadows Golf Club since it was built. Best wishes from all in the Section.

Please remember our website and forum pages at:  
[www.eastofenglandbigga.com](http://www.eastofenglandbigga.com)  
 Many thanks.

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club.  
[steveimmingham@aol.com](mailto:steveimmingham@aol.com)



## BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

The worst of the snow looks to have passed even for the month of March; there are several well-known weather sayings. One of these, dating from the 17th Century, is thought to help you use March's weather to forecast that of May. And goes as follows: "So many mists in March, so many frosts in May". In other words, you will see as many frosty days in May as there were foggy days in March. But is there any meteorological fact behind this saying? I will let you decide, as over the last few months we have experienced some of the most severe winter mornings of the last decade.

Golfing events in 2009 have now been confirmed and some great venues to look forward to. Burford Golf Club kick off the season, hosting the Spring National Qualifier on April 30. Oaklands Park Golf Club will host the Summer Tournament on June 18 followed by the Autumn Invitational at Donnington Valley Golf Club on August 13 and finally the Turkey Trot at The Oxfordshire on December 9 to finish off the year.

Gareth Acteson will be organising the ever popular Rigby Taylor Pairs for 2009 and can be contacted on 07734 856 924.

With regards to the social calendar, Adam King a man with local knowledge, is planning a cricket match at Radley College, near Abingdon, where you will have the chance to test your bowling, batting and fielding at one of the most prestigious sporting grounds in the country followed by tea and sandwiches in the historic pavilion overlooking the cricket square, not to be missed, keep your eyes on the website for further information.

On March 26, at Frilford Heath Golf Club, the Section has organised an educational seminar which will feature Chris Lomas, from The Berkshire Golf Club; Murray Long, from Sunningdale Golf Club; Tim Lobb, Golf Course Architect. Topics will include tournament preparation, design, construction and installation of irrigation and water usage. Details and booking can be found on the Section website.

After winning a green card on the lottery to emigrate to the USA a few years ago, Jake Snyman will be going west and uprooting and moving to Austin Texas to start a new life with his family at the University of Texas Golf Club in America. Jake has been working under Adam King at Radley College, for the last few years and from all the Radley staff and fellow greenkeepers far and wide, we wish Jake and family a safe trip and best of luck in his new career and life abroad.

Just a quick mention to Gordon the Hun - who thought he might have got away with it. It was Gordon's his first ever Harrogate Week experience this year and it certainly won't be his last, after a few wee nippy sweeties at the bar, Gordon left his bath running and managed to flood all and sundry at the hotel - one I just can't let him forget.

As usual if you have any news or views please contact the Section Secretary, Adam King, on: [ajk@radley.org.uk](mailto:ajk@radley.org.uk) The new website for the Section is: [bbogreenkeepers.co.uk](http://bbogreenkeepers.co.uk)

Let's hope for a good long summer!

Mark Day  
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# Around the Green



## MID-ANGLIA

A quiet month, this month which is just as well as hopefully, by now, all have recovered from Harrogate and the batteries are recharging ready for the onslaught that spring will bring.

Not much to report either other than the spring tournament is still to be confirmed but will most likely be at Hatfield London Country Club at Essendon in Hertfordshire on April 21. The summer competition has yet to be arranged, the autumn leg is at Mid-Herts Golf Club on October 7 and the "Tour" concludes at John O'Gaunt Golf Club on December 7.

Although it is a little late by the time this goes to print, congratulations to Roger Clark for chalking up a half century - and amazingly he doesn't look a day over 60!

Now if anyone can offer a friend of mine some advice it would be most welcome. For a while now he has suspected his wife of having an affair. The usual signs are there: The phone rings but if he answers, the caller hangs up. His wife has been going out with "the girls" a lot recently, although when he asks their names she always says "just some friends from work, you don't know them". When she comes home, quite often he is sure he can smell male aftershave on her clothes. He has tried to observe who is dropping her off back at their house but his view is obscured so just recently he took to hiding in the garage to get a better view. She came home around midnight the other night and as the car drew up my friend crouched down in the garage behind his golf clubs when he noticed a hairline crack where the grip meets the graphite shaft on his 3-wood.

Is this something he can fix himself or should he take it back to the pro-shop where he bought it?

Craig Spooner  
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## SOUTH EAST REGION - SURREY

Monday, February 2. We have had in excess of 12 inches of snow - and it's still snowing. There will only be few greenkeepers at work in Surrey today and those that have managed to get in will be putting out the 'course closed' and 'no sledging' signs, then giving the sheds a quick early spring clean before going home to get under their wives' feet. I managed a walk to the local shops for milk, beer and wine, just in case it keeps snowing. Be prepared is my motto, this could be a long white week. I have not seen snow as deep as this in Surrey ever before and if this is global warming I don't want to see an ice age.

Harrogate has come and gone but it is always a pleasant change to have greenkeepers visit me on the stand instead of me driving all over the South East of England to call on them. We were able to entertain a few of our customers on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and it is always gratifying to know how much they enjoy themselves. Ronny, Dougie and Roger sampled the chippy on Tuesday while Gavin followed the wrong group out of our hotel on Wednesday and we, that includes John and Bob, never saw him again until the next morning. I haven't used surnames just in case there are any possible repercussions or recriminations and if there are, I know and saw nothing.

I have just received a text from Jon Budd telling me that he has written and had a book published and I was going to offer a prize for guessing the title but Jon has since text again with that information. I had expected 'The Greenkeepers Guide to the Galaxy' or maybe 'Lady Chatterley's Greenkeeper' or even 'Noddy and Big Ears visit Saltex'. How wrong can you be, Jon's book is entitled '40 Buddy Marvellous Years' in which Jon reminisces on his life, the universe and everything - and would you believe it I'm not even mentioned. Well done, I hope it's a huge success and if so, will you help me with mine, it will consist of my ramblings taken from Around the Green over the past years and will be called 'Stop the Van I Want to Get Off'.

Brian Willmott



## KENT

Snow, snow and more snow. The worst snow we have seen in this neck of the woods for two decades has virtually shut every course for days on end. At least I've got plenty of time to write this report for a change!

I shall begin with my verdict on Harrogate week 2009. Even though the show was slightly smaller than usual, I, for one, thought it was probably the best one I have ever attended. There were several reasons for this. Firstly I was asked to attend a meeting hosted by BIGGA HQ about the future direction of the magazine. The couple of dozen people who were invited were all extremely committed individuals and a lively debate with the Editor, Assistant Editor and Designer present should ensure some changes very soon.

Secondly, the show itself was alive with energy. The exhibitors I spoke to all said that although numbers were probably down, there were more senior representatives from all walks of turf management which made the trip worthwhile for them. The BIGGA AGM I also thought was very interesting. The proposed inclusion of Groundsmen to our midst did seem to be a confusing avenue to be taking at first, but a far more sensible route to go down once it was explained face to face. It was refreshing to hear how, in the face of criticism coming from every angle, our Association is willing to listen and change. Lastly, I also attended a meeting for Section Secretaries. Again a few people were concerned about some constitutional matters but I think most of us would have left content with how the Association is being progressed by Head Office. All in all, then, a very worthwhile trip.

Back in Kent we are busy preparing for the winter Olympiad 2012. The finishing touches are being applied to the toboggan run and ski-jump on my 15th hole. I've been sweeping the car park daily so that should be good for curling. Various birds are ice-dancing on the lakes and I reckon my guys will



be favourites for the “who can build the biggest snowball competition” Gold medal. I’m probably favourite for the “Who can get hit by most snowballs”. As long as the snow isn’t yellow, I don’t care!

Our fixtures for the year begin in earnest this month with our spring qualifier being hosted on the links of Walmer and Kingsdown. We are truly privileged to be allowed to play this James Braid designed, delightful course in its centenary year. Alternatively, if this snow hasn’t cleared our national qualifier will be decided by a tournament of Super Swing Golf on the Wii at my house. Bring your own beer! Seriously though, please be sure to contact me or Kev as soon as possible to confirm your place at Walmer, it promises to be a great day for all. Full results and exploits of the day to follow soon.

Lastly, I would like to thank all our sponsors for 2009 who have graciously given us their support for the year. I will give them all an individual mention next month.

Roll on summer. Best of British

Rob Holland  
kentgreenkeepers.co.uk



## ESSEX

As I write this we are in the throws of the coldest spell for many a year. Around the corner should be warmer weather but who knows.

I spent a couple of days at Harrogate week back in January and linked up with Don Clark (Section Chairman) to attend the AGM, information from which you will no doubt have read in this magazine either this month or in the last edition.

At the beginning of February, I completely revamped and changed the website over to a new host, the reason for this was to be able to have more control over the way the site was laid out. It has enabled me to be given the chance to get the most up to date information out faster. I can input most things within minutes of receipt, even when I’m away from home as long as I have access to a computer.

There will be a full list of events, information, photographs, our sponsors, useful links and much more, plus downloadable entry forms and anything that Martin (our Secretary) throws my way.

Along with anything that I receive from the Region or BIGGA Headquarters.

The site is there for you all, so I would appreciate some input from you in the Section. Look us up: [www.essexbigga.co.uk](http://www.essexbigga.co.uk)

Tony Kirwan is on the lookout for clubs to host four golf days next season. So if you would like to be considered please contact Tony at: [antz16@btinternet.com](mailto:antz16@btinternet.com)

As I was sat writing these notes, I received an email from Tony Barker, Course Manager at North Weald Golf Club, he wished to inform you all that he is leaving the club to take over ownership of Loughton Golf Club. It’s a big step up from managing someone else’s. I for one wish him much success for the future.

Ian Denny, late of Symbio, has taken his place. Ian had been a greenkeeper in the Essex Section, before he went to work as a representative for Symbio.

Tony wishes Ian good fortune in his new roll, as I think we all do.

The Section Seminar will have passed when you get this bulletin, but be sure, I will give you the news of the event, in the next month’s news.

Any information for this inclusion on this page or on our website should be sent to me at: [essexbigga@talktalk.net](mailto:essexbigga@talktalk.net) or on: 07764862337.

Arnold Phipps-Jones  
Press Officer



## SOUTH WEST & WALES REGION - SOUTH WEST

It’s difficult to know whether to laugh or cry during this miserable winter weather. I’m sitting writing this with three inches of snow on the ground, and wondering whether or not I’m going to get to Gatwick tomorrow for a week in Madeira (or more likely a week in the terminal at Gatwick if the weather gets much worse). At least the course is nice and quiet at the moment - I well remember working at a previous club which was right in the edge of town, and it only took a couple of centimetres of snow for the whole course to be swarming with kids on makeshift toboggans. By 4pm on a snowy day, any and every moveable item of course furniture (and some of the toboggans) would end up in one of the course lakes. I remember being really upset as a young apprentice being forced into the waters’ edge on a rope and floundering around trying to drag the “Captains Bench” out of the pond, only for the Secretary, red-faced, to fling open his window and bellow – “what the hell do you think you’re doing – you’ll damage the blasted liner!”

Just now plenty of frustrated Seniors & Ladies, but hopefully by the time this is published we’ll be much nearer spring.

Harrogate Week was an outstanding success – happily even the weather was just about okay. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard on it. Well done to everyone who attended from the South West; you helped make the week a huge success. Next year will be even better, and HQ welcome any suggestions for education themes and subjects, which could be emailed to [rachael@bigga.co.uk](mailto:rachael@bigga.co.uk) (or me). Chris Sealey worked tirelessly for the Section as usual during the week, canvassing our Patronage Partners and introducing Simon Broome – winner of the annual sponsored place - to demonstrate the good use of their sponsorship funds.

Jane Jones, Laurence Pithie and I are sitting on an Industry Liason panel at Cannington College. Cannington is looking to improve their services and range of training courses available in the South West. One suggestion is to make better use of their Golf Course with practical training sessions. We would welcome your suggestions, as the employers, as to what you want for your staff – for example short courses, bolt-on type learning, more involved science and botany courses, or even just simple “mower” training. Drop any one of us an email with ideas or requests – or mail Will Bowden, the Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Programme Manager at [bowdenw@bridgwater.ac.uk](mailto:bowdenw@bridgwater.ac.uk)

Here in the Section, we’ll make more short courses available as interest dictates – Occasional Users Chainsaw Training is proving popular – I would point out this is not CS30 or CS31 which a Tree Surgeon would need, but this “Occasional Users” version allows for us to legally use a chainsaw as part of our daily duties on the golf course. There will be further Excavator Safety Training, and also the latest initiative is dry-stone walling. Please contact



# Around the Green

me for further details, and please monitor the bulletin boards on the BIGGA website for up to the minute details.

Back here in the Section - Jon Jarvis emailed me with an addition for your diaries: Ladies Nite, at Bath Racecourse, Friday July 31, tickets £11 each, first race 6.05pm, email Jon Jarvis at jonjarvis2@hotmail.com if interested - it's possible the golf club bar will be open prior to event. Thanks very much to Jon for making these arrangements.

We still hope to run a Section "Away Weekend" at Dartmouth and are looking at April 3/4. The cost is likely to be around £180 per person with a sponsored mini-bus. Please get in touch with me straight away if you're interested.

Finally, because I'm feeling completely fed-up just now I've turned to my wife for a little input. She is a medical receptionist, and recently came home with a list of "misprints" from hospital typists. I thought I might share them with you, but if you are squeamish, or easily offended, you might be better off skipping this bit...

He was in his normal rudest of health, until his aeroplane ran out of fuel and crashed. Her husband said she is very sweaty and clammy, and was very hot in bed last night. She was examined - x-rated, and sent home. This patient has no previous history of suicides. Patient has two teenage children but no other abnormalities.

By the time he was admitted his rapid heart had stopped and he was feeling better. An examination revealed the patient is circus sized. The patient was to have a bowel resection. However, he took a job as a stock-broker instead. The lab test indicated abnormal liver function. When she fainted her eyes rolled around the room. Patient was seen in consultation with Doctor Smith who felt we should sit on the abdomen and I agree. Discharge status - alive - but without my permission.

Well I did warn you - and we thought greenkeeping was dangerous. The moral is to stay away from doctors! Good luck in the aeration season and look forward to a mild spring with gentle showers and no frost.

Any news welcome - Paul Worster  
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



## SOUTH COAST

At the time of writing this month's report we in the South Section are in the grip of the worst snowfall for 18 years. Extra days off for Assistant David and myself!

The committee met at Chris Bitten's club in late January and had a very good but long meeting. I have been advised to inform you all to look at the BIGGA website ([www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)) for up to date information about the Section, including the fixtures for 2009. At this time not all fixtures have been arranged but should be available from Chris Bitten so phone him on: 07796887633 or: 02380679385.

Due to lack of interest the Jim Fry Trophy will not run this year but we hope to next year.

The numbers of members in our Section is 261 as at the end of December.

Two fixtures are being held at Barton On Sea this year - the Course

Management Trophy on June 1 and the annual match against the Secretaries on June 14. Other venues are Parkstone for the spring tournament and Hampworth for the summer.

Please phone me or email me with any news you think we would all like to be informed about.

Until next month

Chris Sturgess 07773138409  
chrismaggsturgess@tiscali.co.uk



## DEVON & CORNWALL

First off on behalf of everybody in the Section I would like to offer our condolences to Abi Crosswood, our Section Administrator, after her recent family bereavement.

Our January meeting was held at the lovely Yelverton course on the edge of Dartmoor where we held our 'individual medal' qualifying competition for the BIGGA National Championships. We had three different categories, 0-8 h'cap, which was won by Jason Brooks, from Torquay, with a 75. 9-16 h'cap won by Gavin Moore, from Launceston, with 73 and the 17-28 h'cap was won by Eric Barber with a 75 after a four way count back, congrats to all and good luck at Burnham!

The course walk was taken by George Pitts, Course Manager, with around 30 in attendance. Thanks to George for his time and effort and to his team for the use of their superb course, in lovely condition. Thanks also to Yelverton for their hospitality and to the catering staff for the wonderful meal.

Stuart Dymond, a very knowledgeable and much respected Course Manager and one of our original committee members, retires shortly after 49 years in greenkeeping. Stuart started at Bude moved to North Wilts and for the last 24 years has been in charge at St Enodoc. Congratulations Stuart and on a personal note I would like to wish you good luck in the future!

Congratulation also to Billy Mitchell who was presented with the Unsung Hero Award at Harrogate, something many of us feel is long overdue and thoroughly deserved! As Bill has been one of the stalwarts of the Devon & Cornwall Section since the beginning. Billy has been at Perranporth for nearly 45 years and is currently in charge and has been for a number of years. Well done Bill and thanks from us all!

The Devon & Cornwall Section would like to thank Pete Bond and 'The Greenkeeping Depot' company for sponsoring the mini bus to Harrogate this year. A total of 11 from the far West of Cornwall all the way up and all the way back, a big thanks to Keith Kemp for getting everyone there and back safely. Cheers drive!

The two students from Duchy College who were sponsored jointly by the Duchy & Section to go to Harrogate were Adam Mitchell, from Tehidy Park, and Tim Parker, from Woodbury, (both NVQ 2). I understand they were a credit to themselves, the College and the Section alike and had a lovely time. They found it very educational and would highly recommend it to any future Duchy students!

Jerry Cole 07764 224582  
Greenwaysjrc@aol.com



## SOUTH WALES

Hello everyone/Sut mae?! Hope you are all well.

Firstly, an apology for a few errors in last month's column, the date for the Parc y Scarlets evening was February 17 and not the 10.

But before anyone sues me for wasted petrol and/or post traumatic stress for spending a Tuesday evening in Llanelli, let me just say that the information given to me by the sponsors was believed correct at the time of going to print - so there!

I also still cringe when I am reminded that I congratulated our Secretary, Steve Chappell, for being picked to go to America with Bernhards, only to hear a few days after the magazine went to print that the trip had been cancelled! Sorry Steve!

So, here are the final two dates for the winter series of evening lectures: Tuesday, March 10 - A talk by Mark Hunt, of Headland Amenity - Pencoed College - 7pm until 9pm. Tuesday, April 14 - Cardiff City Old & New - 5.30pm until 8.30pm - A tour of the new CCFC stadium with Stadium Manager, Wayne Nash, followed by a talk on top dressings and rootzones by Nick Gray, from Bathgate Silica Sands. Please note that all known 'Jacks' will be searched on arrival at the site for Swansea City shirts that they may attempt to bury under the pitch.

Still on education, our Section's Spring Seminar will again be held at Royal Porthcawl on Thursday, April 23. Details of speakers will follow in next month's magazine.

The following night (April 24) sees the return of the IOG Annual Dinner. Many Greenkeepers have attended this excellent event in the past and a good time is usually had by all.

The event offers you the chance to take your loved one (or if she can't make it - the wife) for an excellent meal, a chance to put faces to names and then to boogie the night away! Please contact Steve Chappell if you are interested.

The Section's golf days will be starting in late spring (details to follow.) If you haven't attended our golf days in the past or maybe you've stopped attending for whatever reason, why not give it a go? You can be assured of a warm welcome and a chance to play some great and varied golf courses that we are blessed with in this beautiful country of ours. So whether you're on the Cardigan coast, or the Welsh Marches, we would be only too glad to see you.

Finally, just to let you know that my wife, Donna, finally saw sense and instead of giving birth on the day of the Wales v England Rugby International, decided instead to have our baby three weeks early. Carys Evana was born on January 26 weighing 7lb 3oz. Both mother and baby are doing well. Dad, however, can't wait to get back to work to have a rest!

If you have any info that you would like mentioned in this column, please contact me on the following number/email address:

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