



News from the Chief Executive

Augusta and St Andrews, two names that when mentioned will immediately bring images of golf to a great many people. Both great sporting arenas at completely different ends of the golf spectrum. One a highly manicured, magnificent but exclusive showcase the other a sensitively managed area of coastline, largely as nature made it, for the pleasure of the public as well as the golfer. I wonder what pops up in your mind? For me it is the view from the 12th tee at Augusta looking down over Rae's Creek to a tight, slightly sloping, green that is framed by pine trees and a mass of colourful azaleas. At St Andrews it is standing on the 1st tee looking down on the links in the early morning sunshine, trying to imagine golfers of a bygone age 'knocking one down the middle'. Not that I have personally played either!

I have this year had the pleasure of visiting the Masters as a guest of the PGA, to whom I am eternally grateful. I have often watched this tournament on TV, never thinking that one day I would be witnessing it in person. I have until now been somewhat cynical of the lush green fairways, the carefully prepared, lightening fast greens and the splashes of colour more fitting of a botanical garden. I am a convert. There is a place for Augusta as long as we realise that it is maintained somewhat regardless of cost, it is in an area with the climate needed to grow the grass species, it is exclusive and it is largely prepared over 51 weeks for this one tournament. How we get this message over to the average UK golfer who watches his or her TV and then expects greens staff over here to replicate such conditions I do not know. My visit to Augusta was special and I brought back memories of a unique golf course as well as having had some very productive talks for the Association.

Back in the real world I am working on the voting papers for the forthcoming Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) that has been scheduled for Tuesday, June 16. The meeting is being convened for the express purpose of voting on changes to the Constitution that will allow access to fuller membership by groundsmen involved with the maintenance of sports turf. This matter has been debated over many, many months and the changes, if adopted, will aid advancement of the Association. This motion has the full support of the Board and I hope that after due consideration members will support it also. There is a fear that BIGGA will be taken over by groundsmen and that the greenkeeping profession will lose its identity. I, and the Board, do not share those fears. The greenkeeping aspect of the Association is highly regarded and respected and while we hope to recruit groundsmen I do not see a massive influx of new members happening overnight. We will merely be offering everyone in the sports turf industry a wider choice and a great number will continue to support the IoG or perhaps no single organisation.

Finally as we move out of spring into summer let's hope that we enjoy better weather than in previous years and that the golfers come out to play wearing sensible heads, with realistic expectations. We can but hope!

John Pemberton
Chief Executive



SCOTTISH REGION AYRSHIRE

Hope you're all keeping well and your courses are taking shape. Just a few things to let you know about. Firstly, the Autumn Outing has been confirmed for Thursday, October 1, at Powfoot GC. Although I've never played the course, I have heard good things and will be looking forward to our visit!

Another confirmed date is September 11th for our trip to Northern Ireland, and Royal Belfast GC, where we will be defending the Shield we managed to wrest from the County Down boys last year! We are looking for some courageous souls to join some old stalwarts as we endeavour to hold on to the spoils taken in Dumfries! Get in touch if you're up for a wee adventure and the opportunity to play some excellent golf courses! I will be looking to take a deposit of £40 to help with bookings.

Our football match against the West was played on Saturday, March 21. The Alloway ground saw a competitive but fair game played to a 3 - 3 draw. Both sides seemed happy with the result although we had been leading 3 - 1 at half-time. I believe match referee, Euan Grant, has compiled a small report on the day so I won't go into too much detail except to say I think Specsavers have a deal on the noo boss! Seriously though, thanks to all the guys that turned out for the match, it was good fun and hopefully we'll have a return match towards the end of the year.

That's all folks! Any news or queries contact me at: denis.t@hotmail.co.uk or: 07939 104701

Cheers!

Denis Tweddell



CENTRAL

The season is now well underway and at the time of writing, the weather through early spring has been with us for once so far in this part of the country. Although dry, it has probably been warmer than average with soil temperatures slightly ahead of normal. For the third year in succession we have had to apply water earlier than we would have ideally liked, purely to prevent the surfaces drying out too much.

However, all indications are that it looks like it is going to be a tough year financially, with advance bookings of visitors down at many Clubs. Many Course Managers have reported their budgets at best have been frozen, if not cut, and I know a few courses where greens staff have left for various reasons and have not been replaced.

The Section held an interesting seminar in March where Geoffrey Davison explained the principals of drainage, this was fairly well attended and I am sure everyone went away having learned something of value. I found his advice on the critical tension of sands particularly interesting.



In April, we were also fortunate to be entertained and educated by Stan Zontek, of the USGA Greens section; John Kaminski, of Penn State, and Lane Tredway, of North Carolina State. Stan is a regular visitor to this area and we are fortunate to have someone of his experience and knowledge willing to come and present to us.

Finally, our best wishes go to Roddy Barron, Course Manager of the Straththrum Course, at St Andrews Links, who accepted voluntary redundancy in April after 35 years working for the Links Trust. Roddy is now hoping to spend more time with his other love, (no not Lorna) piping. An excellent piper, he plans to increase his teaching but I'm sure he will also manage to fit in a little bit more fishing, gardening, as well as seeing more of Lorna!

The results of the spring outing will be in next month's edition as well as appearing on the website: www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Gordon Moir



EAST

The start of the golfing season is well under way now and the grass is growing again Hurrah!

I did say in last month's report that the scores from the spring meeting at Eyemouth would be posted, but you will all have to wait for the June edition to find out who won what at the golf.

During the winter months we, as a Section, organised site visits and seminars which were well attended, our Chairman, Stewart Crawford, would like to say thank you to all the members who supported these events and hopes this is the sign of the future in getting members back supporting the BIGGA events.

BIGGA members who attend short course and seminars site visits etc in their Section events can now obtain CPD points when registering in person to the awards programme with BIGGA. If you go onto the BIGGA website or phone BIGGA headquarters you can find out more on how to gain CPD credits.

We are looking to organise other events for next winter possible a visit to Barenbrug seeds factory, Falkirk district - kindly sponsored by Greentech Ltd. And possibly one other visit to WBB Minerals plant, at Levenseat Quarry, West Lothian.

All members will be notified of these visits nearer the time by our Section Secretary, Stuart Ferguson.

Handicaps and Trophies are all now in order thanks to the hard work by Robbie Murdoch, our handicap convenor.

One of our BIGGA East Section's life members, James Neilson, would like to donate a Golf Trophy to play for at our AGM day, which will be held at Gogarburn GC this year.

We thank Jimmy for his kind donation and make sure that we will play for every year.

That's all for this month's report.

If you have any news please pick up the phone and call me with anything you might think is worth a mention in our section news.

Tom Murray
07709960163



NORTH

By the time you read this the spring Section outing at Portlethen will probably have been and gone. If this is the case I hope that you all enjoyed your day and you managed to set a personal best or win a raffle. I know a few people get disappointed when they don't win. It's the highlight of their day. The results will follow in next month's issue where you can find out who won the sombrero and who didn't!

Again Robert Hardie, who runs the 200 Club, has asked me has asked me to mention the importance if you are not intending on keeping your number(s) to get them back to him so that he can re-sell them to other people. He also said that if any of you out there could manage to sell any more tickets to either give him a shout at the outing or to phone him on: 07590775957. Thank you, this is much appreciated.

This week over at Royal Aberdeen, the Scottish Boys Championships is being played. The North has been pretty fortunate with high profile tournaments over the past few and coming years. Royal Aberdeen also has the British Ladies Amateur and Murcar Links has the Scottish Amateur Strokeplay. Long may it continue!

Changing the subject now. One guy who is on the move is Ross Middleton from Royal Aberdeen. He is taking the big step of immigrating to Australia to hopefully work at Barnbugle Links. He has been at Balgownie for 11 years. On behalf of the Section we wish you all the best and enjoy the ride.

That's all for this month folks and remember if you have any news that that you think worthy of a mention in the magazine then please feel free to drop me a line on 07813889374.

Ben Brookes



WEST

Welcome to this month's report. It's been a long winter with some cold weather for a change, spring has now arrived with the usual rain and cold east winds. Not to worry the shorts and tee shirts will soon be on.

On the job front congratulations to Andy Peace, who has moved to a new post at Gleddoch Golf Club, in Langbank, Andy was formerly at Port Glasgow.

During March the STRI held a seminar at Loch Lomond Golf Club - subject on the art of objective Greenkeeping and the Green objective.

It was a first class day with talks from Henry Bechelet, Richard Windows, Andy Cole, Alistair Beggs, Lee Penrose, all from the STRI.

David Cole, Course Manager at Loch Lomond Golf Course, did a first class presentation on the day-to-day running at Loch Lomond.

Many thanks to Loch Lomond for allowing us use of their facility and to



Around the Green

David Carson, from Rigby Taylor, for sponsoring the day.

The Section held a football match against Ayrshire during March. After a hard fought match it ended in a 3-3 draw, we plan to play a rematch towards the end of the season. Many thanks to Brian Hillan for organising the team, the next match will be played in the west as Ayrshire were the home team this time. So contact myself or Brian if you're interested in playing.

On the education front we returned to Marr Hall to see how the course is coming on. The party on the day were the third year students from GOSTA training.

Gordon Kerr, the Course Manager, took us on a course walk and talked on how the course is developing. It was a first class day and great to see the course growing in so well.

Many thanks to Gordon for giving up his valuable time and I'm sure we wish him all the best when the course opens in the near future.

I will be arranging a trip to one of the quarries in autumn so if anyone is interested please give me a bell.

Well that's all for now see you next month.

Fraser Ross
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NORTHERN REGION

NORTH EAST

Well last month's report said it was snowing while writing the report - how things have changed in four weeks, at the minute it's pretty warm and sunny - roll on the summer.

Recently two open events have taken place, first the celebration of Terry Charlton's company T.S.L. It has been going for 25 years, it doesn't seem that long ago when I remembered Terry calling in to see me when I worked at Whickham Golf Club.

Apparently there were 170 delegates at St. James Park in attendance and a good day had by all - pity about Steve Pope missing out on the draw they had. Seemly his name came out for the prize, but unfortunately he had to leave early to collect his grandson from school so it was decided to have a re-draw. Never mind, Steve, you might win something in the spring competition raffle prizes.

Secondly, Heworth Golf Club played hosts to a demo by Full Circle Irrigation through John Deere and Greenlay, of Cramlington, which was attended by approx 40 greenkeepers, not only from the north east, but several greenkeepers in the Cleveland Section. A good few hours was had by all, complete with an indoor talk and a demo outside on the 18th green and, in between, an excellent buffet provided.

Other news around is that, at last, Hexham GC extension to the sheds has finally been finished giving them a extra 50% space - seems a lot but we needed it.

Also a golf course from our Section will be featured in the greenkeeper magazine in the next few months.

Again if anyone has any news for me please let me know even if it's future work on your course.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTH WEST

The next function is the Spring Tournament and National Tournament qualifier. This is to be held at West Lancashire Golf Club on Monday, May 10. If you wish to play at one of the top golf courses in the North West then 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 mobile no: 07985175825.

I can be contacted on: 0151-289-4625

My email is: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



NORTH WALES

Only a short column this month, there's not a lot of news to pass on to you at the moment.

To start with we have to thank the North West Section for holding the spring seminar at Birchwood Golf Club in Warrington on April 24, the subject was that of "disturbance theory" and was prepared and presented by the boffins at the STRI, unfortunately I was unable to go due to work commitments, but I understand it was extremely interesting especially to anyone using or thinking of taking up the "gingerbread" greenkeeping system.

The spring tournament will take place at Rhyl Golf Club on May 20 - tee times will be limited so get your entry forms to Jeremy Hughes as soon as possible.

The annual North Wales/North West match will take place at Bolton Golf Club on June 10, to paraphrase an historic war hero "North Wales expects every golfer to do his or her duty."

If your interest lies in further education the Welsh College of Horticulture at Northop are starting sports surface courses in NVQ Levels 2 and 3, and also a Foundation Degree in Sports surface Management, anyone interested in taking up any of these courses should contact the college for a prospectus.

Once again I seem more than a little foiled for local news; perhaps you can send me your good news so I can spread onto this page for the rest of us to be jealous of you! Contact details below. All the best until next month.

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07756001187

Johnny Evans
Johnnyevans@tesco.net



MIDLAND REGION EAST MIDLAND

Hi All. I suspect as you read this we will have just played our Spring Tournament at Kirby Muxloe Golf Club on April 22. Here's hoping it was a warm, sunny spring day with good golf and good company being had by all. The results will be published in next month's magazine.

For those that are interested the dates for the rest of the tournaments this year are: July 2 – Greetham Valley, 18 hole medal (National Champs Qualifier) & BBQ; October 15 – Matlock GC, Meal and AGM; December 8 – Wollaton Park. We will hopefully also be running the annual Toro sponsored trip – this year will hopefully be to Wimbledon Tennis Club and we are also in the process of organising an Educational day during the autumn. Further dates and venues of these events are to be announced when known.

If anyone wants to get in contact regarding any news, ideas for golf days, venues, education or anything else to do with the Section then please contact me by email: biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com or on: 07730 713895.

Andy de Wet



MIDLAND

Well I was hoping that we all would be rushed off our feet by the time that you read these notes. However, it seems that our varied weather has given us a slight rest-bite - although I dare say that crazy-ville is now upon us.

With such in mind, I feel that many do not appreciate the work that goes into producing our Section calendar. Also the difficulties of finding sponsorship for such can be very problematic, particularly in the lack of submitted photos from us members. Could I please urge you to respond to the below request from our organiser of photographs R. Beacham.

It is again our intention, for 2010, to produce our Midland Section calendar for all of you members out there. However, we can only do this with your assistance so any budding photographers out there please get snapping, whether it be your course or something funny at your club – just make sure it's greenkeeping related. Who knows, you may well have your club featured on our fine calendar, your members would be rightly proud of such. If at all possible put the photograph on a disc and mail it to Richard as this ends up being a better quality photograph for the calendar, if this is not possible then send it via email. Get snapping folks, we need these in by the middle of September at the latest. Send to: Course Manager, Richard Beacham, Wrekin Golf Club, Golf Links Lane, Wellington, Telford, TF6 5BX. Email: rich71@btconnect.com

On the note of the calendar, this month's page is sponsored by our old friends Rigby Taylor, for your fertilisers and chemicals etc contact Tony Cheese email: t.cheese@rigbytaylor.com

The Section recently held another successful education event at Sandwell

Park Golf Club, which was sponsored by Rigby Taylor. Thanks to Tony Cheese, Kate Entwistle, Andy Cole and Ben Taylor for their participation. The Section is actively looking to increase the networking opportunities for greenkeepers by organising social afternoon meetings at various courses throughout the Section. Whether your bag is sustainability or 2mm and verticutting, we would like to encourage networking groups which can operate via email and a friend to lean on. Please contact Paul Woodham if you would like to know more or maybe offer to show off your management plans, successes or indeed failures. Don't be shy, we have all dropped the odd clanger and learnt from it.

My thanks to both Richard and Paul for the above content. Well that's all folks, I'm off fluff flicking for a week.

Sean McDade



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello all. Not a lot to report this month, I guess everyone is out busy cutting grass now the season is upon us. Hopefully the start of May dawns as dry as the end of March has been. It has helped our place dry out fantastically and everything is starting to look good for the summer.

Our May golf day is at Elsham Golf Club on Wednesday, May 20. Tee off is 1:30 but arrive early for coffee and bacon rolls. Full details will be sent to you soon.

Many thanks.

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club
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BERKS/BUCKS & OXON

Washed out Augusta: Heavy rain at Augusta washed out the first days play as the usually pristine course was turned into a quagmire with more atrocious weather forecast, as I sit here watching the drama and writing my monthly report.

Surface water increased as the dedicated greenstaff watched in frustration as a plugged ball illustrated just how waterlogged the course had become after a week of heavy rain. It was then that I realised I was watching repeats of five years ago and the weather was actually pretty good in Augusta, sunshine, sunshine and more sunshine.

The fact will always remain that more and more people dream of playing this little slice of heaven on earth than any other course in the world. Rain or no rain, nowhere in the sporting world is there a better example of an aesthetic backdrop with the fascination of exotic bulbs and horticultural splendour to bring a competitive arena alive like that at Augusta.

Welcome to May, and it just might bring you flowers. "Anyway, what's been going on?" I hear you ask. The end of March saw the start of an education



Around the Green

seminar at Frilford Heath Golf Club where varied speakers gave valuable information to the sixty or so members who attended the day.

Chris Lomas gave an enlightening talk about the experiences he had and the pros and cons of installing a new irrigation system at The Berkshire Golf Club. Tim Lobb gave a fascinating and entertaining talk on Golf Course Architecture which included internal hole changes, design and construction. Jonathan Harmer from Farmura gave an interesting talk on Surfactants and soil water relationships from top to bottom and Murray Long from Sunningdale Golf Club introduced us to the world of Tournament preparation that had us entertained and riveted to our seats. More to come on this - keep hitting bbogreenkeepers.co.uk for all the latest Section seminars and information.

Thank you to Sid Arrowsmith and Frilford Heath Golf Club for hosting the seminar and Alec MacEndoe for his hard work who spent his time organising and bringing together these varied speakers.

Tournaments for the rest of the year are now confirmed as follows: Summer - June 18 at Oakland Park Golf Club, Autumn Pairs - August 13 at Donnington Valley Golf Club and The Turkey Trot to end the year at The Oxfordshire GC on December 9.

Also this year - weather permitting - a Golf and Cricket Match on July 8 at Radley College as the Berks, Bucks & Oxon's finest take on the loG. All interested players and makers of cucumber sandwiches, please give me a buzz.

Lastly, Adam King hopes to issue another newsletter later this year. In the meantime, if you have any news of views please let us know, and if there is any club out there wishing to host Golf days for the Section next year and beyond please contact Adam on: 07778569158 or email: ajk@radley.org.uk

Mark Day
mark.day@tacitgolf.co.uk



MID-ANGLIA

Fixtures for 2009: The summer competition has yet to be confirmed but it is very likely to be held at Bedford & County Golf Club some time in July or August. The autumn fixture is at Mid-Herts GC on October 7 and John O'Gaunt GC will host the Turkey Trot on December 7.

Craig Spooner



SOUTH EAST REGION

SURREY

Saturday, April 4. B.O has been and gone. Many would hope that G.B would take the hint and do the same. For B.O read Barack Obama and for G.B read Going Bust. Sorry that should be Gordon Brown...no I was right the

first time. Enough of trying to be satirical, time to move to paragraph two.

Thursday, April 2. The spring meeting at Laleham GC was a great success and with 64 members playing in the Texas Scramble it was one of the best supported golf days for many years. Thanks to J.R and his team for getting rid of D.S and providing us with an excellent course in wonderful weather. For J.R read John Ross and not Jehovah's Return and for D.S read whatever you will but, with the exception of Dave Searles, whom it is impossible to be rid of.

The winning team included their Captain R.C that's Ron Christie and not the way he walks. Another J.R who should have been the most popular member of the group, Jane Russell, turned out to be Jim although we understand he was still allowed to play off the red tees. J.H, that's not James Hunt as he was unable to play due to feeling unwell, was substituted with Jason Hunt.

Last, but not least, was R.T, not E.T's brother although the same handicap and colouring, was our very own Surrey Bowl organizer, Roger Tydeman. The runners-up were Shaun Sturret, Andy Gatland, Mark Raisbeck and Pancho Rowlands. The Easter egg raffle promoted by B.W on behalf of Tacit was well received and if I can purchase any cheap left over eggs this year as I did last year and store them as safely, hopefully, once again, nobody will notice the sell by date had been removed.

Cuddington greenkeepers are still sending out the begging letters even though they won a large undisclosed amount on football results a few weeks ago. I saw the bulging wallet of...I have been asked not to name names...one of the lads just before he departed for Gatwick Airport for an unknown destination. His co winners would like to know his neck size and the date of his return so that the party they are planning for him will really go with a swing.

The annual charity day at Hankley Common GC on behalf of autistic children was well attended and Gareth Roberts, one of the organisers, would like to thank all who supported the day and helped to raise around £10,000.

Graeme Roberts, Gareth's son, who has been working on a number of golf courses in America had a lucky escape from a serious injury when a branch he had cut with a chainsaw rebounded from a lower branch and caused the saw to cut his wrist. Although a very ugly gash resulted he was fortunate that he had missed an artery by millimetres. A lesson to all chainsaw users is not to continue cutting when alone.

Ami Kate is the beautiful daughter of Sam Surgey and husband, Rob. Ami arrived weighing 8lbs, on March 2, 2009 and is already looking forward to having a bedroom of her own as grown ups do make all sorts of strange noises that could disturb a girl's beauty sleep.

Brian Willmott



KENT

Hi guys. Firstly a few words on what had to be one of best events ever at the beautifully quaint setting of Walmer & Kingsdown Golf Club. Surely the remote setting of this gem of a course would render it unknown to anyone barring regulars, sales reps and those with working sat navs. Yet, once



discovered, the course and hospitality presented to us on the cliff tops of Eastern Kent made for an unforgettable experience. We are indebted to all at Walmer for the welcome, the fine course and a great meal to boot.

Results were as follows: 1. Richard Larkin, Tenterden GC; 2. Lee Company, North Foreland GC; 3. Steve Gunner, Wildernesse GC.

Many thanks to our sponsors for providing a few prizes and hats, and to Vic Maynard of Ernest Doe's for his omnipresent refreshment wagon for dispensing mirth and cheer to all of us fortunate enough to play on the day.

On the 21st of this month the Kent Greenkeepers roll into town at Lullingstone Park Golf Club (best dust off those sat nav's again!). Please let us know as soon as possible whether you shall be attending or not by calling me (number below) or Kev.

It is only fair that we give our host clubs as much notice as we can regarding numbers attending so they can arrange their tee sheets and catering around us. It would be great to see as many of you as possible on the day. Walmer was a fantastic day out and there's no reason why Lullingstone shouldn't be as well, after all isn't it the company that makes our days so enjoyable?

Don't forget our budget-busting price-plan for the year where we are only asking for £25 for Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers and Trade and £20 from everyone else.

Hope to see you there.

Don't forget to call me anytime with any news that you would like included in this column.

Best of British

Rob Holland
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07843 410755



LONDON

Hello to the London Section. Many thanks to Clive Osgood for writing for the London Section in April's Magazine.

My name is Lee Cox, and I am the Head Greenkeeper at Mill Hill Golf Club. I will be writing for the London Section from now on.

I would really appreciate any ideas or news for Around The Green, London Section from the members.

Thank you to Matt Plested at Muswell Hill Golf Club for an interesting afternoon on the 'Punctus' Management System hosted by Dr Andrea Talkenberg. This is a very interesting and intelligent Management System and I look forward to trying their demo disc. Any member who would like to receive a demonstration disc should contact Dr Talkenberg on: 020 8133 9592 or: mail@punctus.com.

Spring Meeting - Venue: Brookman's Park Golf Club. Date: Wednesday 29 April 2009. Tee: 11am onwards. To enter please contact Matt Plested on: 07818 410333.

Once again, any news or ideas please contact me on: 07931 927346 or: l.cox15@btinternet.com

Lee Cox
Head Greenkeeper Mill Hill Golf Club



EAST ANGLIA

By this time I hope that spring has sprung and the grasses on your golf course are growing with their usual vigour. You should have received your fixture list for this year by now, but just in case you have not, here they are.

Rookery Park Golf Club, on Wednesday, April 29; Thetford Golf Club, on Thursday, June 11; Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club, on Wednesday, August 12, The Links Golf Club Newmarket, on Thursday, October 22, and last but not least Thorpeness for the Turkey Trot and AGM, on Wednesday, December 9.

Aitkens Sportsturf sponsored a seminar on Disturbance Theory & Performance Measurement presented by the STRI and hosted at Stowmarket Golf Club on Thursday, March 12. 44 attended the event which included several committee members from said club. Henry Bechelet, Andy Cole and Philip Armitage provide some eye-opening theories and kept every one on their toes with a lively presentation. It was great to see some of the members taking part; I think it gave them some idea of just how difficult managing a golf course really is. Our thanks go out to Colin Rushbrook for organising the event, the guys from the STRI and Stowmarket Golf Club, especially for the excellent lunch.

If you wish to contact me, my new number at Thorpeness is: 01728 454494 or email me at: iwilletteastanglia@gmail.com

Ian Willett
Section Secretary



SOUTH WEST & WALES SOUTH WEST

I start this month with news of a new initiative from Cannington College which was the Inaugural Ransomes Jacobsen Trophy staged at Cannington Centre (Bridgwater College).

The event was marketed by the College as an opportunity for young aspiring golfers to get involved in an educational experience as well as compete for a trophy and prizes sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen and Titleist.

The day comprised of a morning of educational demonstrations and 'have a go' practical's that engaged the young participants and explained to them all the effort that goes in to producing a golf course for their enjoyment.

With the expert knowledge of Canningtons, Head Greenkeeper, Hugh Murray and support from PGA Professional Ron Macrow and Programme Manager, Will Bowden, the day was a success both educationally and competitively. The College is running a Programme Lead NVQ 2, alongside the traditional Apprenticeship route for the first time this year and the day was centred on encouraging potential students to see first hand the great facilities and opportunities that are available to them when they study at Cannington.

Programme Manager for Sportsturf; Will Bowden commented: 'The day has been a great success. The sponsorship of Jacobsen and their support has



been fantastic. Also the positive attitude of our staff and first class resources has meant these kids have had a rare and much appreciated insight in to how a golf course looks and plays the way it does.' Cannington will aim to grow this event and encourage the theme of linking a career in sports turf with playing and enjoying the game.

Back in the Section itself, I am hearing, almost on a daily basis, of greenkeepers under pressure, and job cut-backs. Please remember – "It's good to talk" and "a problem shared is a problem halved". Your Committee, myself, or the staff at HQ may be able to help, and there is a dedicated stress help-line available if needed. I think that some good summer weather is critical this year to get people back on the golf courses enjoying playing golf again.

Places for the Ryder Cup support team are limited – the forms have been distributed – if you are interested, you need to respond quickly.

Back at Minch, our spring renovation of greens consisted of verti-drain aeration, followed immediately by a pass with the Graden with 1mm blades at 50mm depth and 50mm spacings, followed by a pass with a Groundsman Aerator fitted with 8mm hollow tines, and a scraper. Sounds rather drastic, but with some overseeding and top-dressing, play was not badly disrupted, and we hosted a successful county match just three weeks later. Hope your work is progressing smoothly.

I recently attended my first National Board Meeting at Aldwark. If anyone is under the impression that serving on the National Board is some kind of a "jolly", or a "day-off" – allow me to dispel that right now. I left home at 6.30am on the Monday morning and was up in York by about 11.15. I had an hour to have a coffee and a look round, before arriving at Aldwark, and starting meetings almost straight away. There are a number of Sub-Committees which meet before the full Board. These Monday meetings didn't finish until around 6.45pm, when there was just time for a shower etc, before an evening meal and bed! The Board meeting on Tuesday morning started at 8.30am prompt and didn't finish until 2pm. There was just time for a sandwich and coffee before jumping back into the car and driving home. Spare a thought therefore for your representatives, and give them the support they need. The Sub Committees, which review issues such as communication & magazine, finance, education & development, and new for this year the environment, are being re-organised via a telephone conferencing system to include input from BIGGA members. There will be a full announcement from Head Office in due course.

The first Section Team match of the year is at Cirencester Golf Club on June 4. Give Wayne Vincent a call on: 07958 630590 if you're interested in playing. There is a £10 charge per player. The Summer Tournament is at Kingsdown on June 24. Please check your email boxes for an invite – if you haven't received one well in advance – please contact me direct. We are looking for a really good turnout – Kingsdown actually invited us this year wishing to show off the course at its very best, and I know that Mark Ford and the team will be there to give us a warm welcome. I must mention our Patronage Partners for this year who will be supporting this event – Avoncrop Amenity, Countrywide Farmers, Headland, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Tower Sport Europe, Ecosol, Irritech, B.S. Mowers, and Symbio. We hope to stage a Seminar in the early autumn at which all these companies will be represented. Also, please keep an eye on Section Pages on the website – there will be some of these company profiles appearing shortly.

In the meantime, may I wish you all the very best for the coming spring and summer seasons, and look forward to talking to as many of you as possible. In particular, please let me know education or training requirements. We can't arrange anything if we don't know what you want!

Paul Worster
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



SOUTH COAST

I have just come home from a committee meeting at Stoneham Golf club and at last I have some information for our Section. Celtic Manor is asking for BIGGA members for help during the Welsh Open & Ryder Cup, contact Jannnie Jones for details.

Kevin Glass has now been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Brockenhurst Manor - good luck to you but you won't need luck as we all know Kevin is a great greenkeeper.

We have 262 members in our Section. Fixtures for next season - now we need your input are there any golf courses that you would like to play if so contact Kevin Glass.

The Isle of Wight meeting on October 1 will be sponsored by our Section. Therefore the Golf & Food will be free. All you have to do is get there - by ferry or fly!

Next year's seminar topic will be 'disturbance theory'. At the regional board meeting it was reported that redundancies were taking place and at least one Head Greenkeeper had lost his job this way - worrying for all of us in this trade.

The results from the spring meeting will be in next month's report. That's all for now, until next month.

Chris Sturgess



DEVON & CORNWALL

Our March meeting was held at Ashbury & Manor House Hotels & Golf Courses on Wednesday 15th, a very pleasant day but a chilly wind. The event was sponsored by Bayer represented by Paul Clifton and Vitax who had Joe Crawley in attendance. Our thanks to both of them and their respective companies.

The competition was won by Andy Parker with an excellent 38pts, 2nd was Tony Hursey, from Stover, with 34pts winning on the back nine and 3rd was Lee Kirk, from MST, also with 34pts well done to them.

This time we had two prizes for Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin thanks to Simon Essex, the owner who provided the additional prize! These were won by Tony Hursey (8th) and Gordon Tamlyn (16th) for the Longest Drives and Kevin Pitts (3rd) and Keith Kemp (9th) for Nearest the Pin.

Thanks to Steve Harris Courses Manager for the course walk and his First Assistant Pete Gross and the rest of the team for the use of the 'Kigbeare' course, a very good test for the golfers in such lovely condition.

Our thanks also to the catering staff for a very enjoyable meal. Afterwards we had the pleasure of a talk by our special guest, Scott MacCallum, the Editor of G.I. on the history of our magazine and how all the stories and articles are

put together - very enjoyable! Thanks to Scott for his time.

Just to clear up any possible misunderstanding from last month's column, Andy Parker was made redundant by Crediton Golf Club.

Don't forget our summer meeting coming up on Thursday, June 18, at Woodbury Park Golf & Country Club, our second annual match between Devon and Cornwall, should be another great day!

Jerry Cole



SOUTH WALES

Hope you are all well and oiling up your Ransomes Hahn ready for the new cutting season (yes, I like to keep abreast of new technology.)

Firstly, you should have received a letter from Steve Chappell regarding The Rigby Taylor Matchplay Tournament - 'The Road To Tenby'. The draw was made at the Spring Seminar (details to follow) Could you please make sure that you all complete your matches within the allotted time so that the competition runs smoothly. Thanks to Dave Carvey, Peter Griffiths and Roy Barker for agreeing to sponsor the event again. I would love to get to the final myself so that I could have a night out on RT, but the only way I'll get to Tenby is if I book a week at Kiln Park!

Also in the letter is an invitation to all greenkeepers to the start of a networking group similar to 'The Gingerbread Men'. It is to be an informal meeting of greenkeepers to discuss all aspects of greenkeeping - especially if you are a non-golf playing member, who does not attend the Section's golf events. Steve Chappell will start the ball rolling with a meeting at Neath GC on Wednesday, May 13, starting at 4.30pm. It will include a tour of the Maintenance sheds, followed by a course walk and then a pint in the bar. All welcome. Give me a ring if you are not too far out of the way and require a lift.

The Spring Tournament for the 'Tower Sports Europe Shield' will take place at Langland Bay Golf Club on Wednesday, May 27, tee off at 1.30pm. Thanks in advance to Peter Lacey and David Goldstone, of Tower, for their continued support of the event. Good luck to Jim Jenkins in his preparation of the course for the event, I still remember how nerve-wracking that can be!

Also thank to Martin Townsend and Peter Holmstrom, from Countrywide, for their hard work, support and sponsorship of this year's evening lecture series. Thanks also to the speakers for this year who were Mike Garner, Maxicrop; Derek Smith, DLF; Mark Hunt, Headland; Nick Gray, Bathgates, as well as Dean Gillisbey, Parc y Scarlets, and Wayne Nash, Cardiff City FC, who entertained us with their presentations through the four lectures. Thanks to all those who attended the series, it was great to see the numbers increasing from last year.

How much rainfall did you have on your golf course last year? Speaking to David Roberts up at Morlais Castle the other day, he said that he measured 2,228 mm of rainfall between Jan '08 and the end of Dec '08, which, according to my phone's converter equals 7ft 2 inches! Can anybody beat that?

See you soon

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Section Notes

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

Suggested word guide: 500

BIGGA Golf Day 2009

Monday 15th June 2009
at Aldwark Manor

For further details, please contact
Kirstin Smith on 01347 833832

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