

Section Notes

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

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



Scottish Region



Central

The Section held a very enjoyable outing at Crieff GC on Sept 17. The course was presented in excellent condition by Charlie MacDonald and his staff and for once this year the weather was kind to us, it was just unfortunate that the turnout was poor with only 17 greenkeepers in a total of 34 attendees.

Principal prize winners were, Best Scratch David Simpson, Crieff. Best Nett, Paul Murphy, Downfield. Best Nett, Class 1, Sandy Reid, Carnoustie., Best Nett, Class 2, Gordon McKie, St Andrews. Best Nett, Spring and Autumn combined, G. McKie, St Andrews. For the full list of prizewinners, check out the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

The golfing season is over for another year so I hope the weather is kind to us all as we spend the next few months, repairing the damage done this year and preparing for next season. It always amazes me when golfers think that this is our quiet time when it is anything but.

At St Andrews the winter is always our busiest time with all the renovations and winter projects or improvements going on, even more so this winter as we complete final preparations for The Open next July.

Gordon Moir



Ayrshire

Glorious sunshine and blue skies greeted the 36 participants

at our Autumn Outing held at Powfoot GC, on Thursday October 1. There were some excellent scores returned over the well presented and scenic course! Our thanks to Course Manager and Club Champion, Neil Hamilton, and his team for the superb condition of the course. Likewise to Club Captain, Dr Liam Kiernan, and the Committee for allowing us the day and to the catering staff who looked after us well and provided some excellent fare!

On behalf of the Ayrshire Section I would also like to express our appreciation to the Patrons and trade reps for their continued support through difficult financial times.

Scottish National Chairman, John Geddes made the journey down from the North of Scotland to attend the event. John helped with the prize-giving and ably assisted Iain Barr with the scorecards, which was a caper in itself. Think we'll need a 10 minute briefing and maths lesson before some are let loose at the next outing.

On to the results for the day then;

1st Class. 1. Allan Smith, Powfoot, 39 pts; 2. Stephen Higgins, Ardeer, 37 pts; 3. Stephen Cairns, Dumfries & County, 36 pts; 4. Neil Hamilton, Powfoot, 36 pts. 2nd Class. 1. Duncan Gray, Pines, 36 pts; 2. Garry Ross, Royal Troon, 36 pts; 3. Paul Tulloch, Bogside, 32 pts; 4. Stephen Sharkey, Bogside, 32 pts. Trade Prize. Alastair Eccles, British Seed Houses, 35 pts.

Special mention to Stephen Higgins for getting his name on the illustrious Harry Diamond Jug for the second time with scores of 42 & 37 points respectively. Well done Stephen!

We had a great day down at Powfoot thanks in part to a good turnout from guys travelling over two hours each way in a lot of cases! So just a quick note of appreciation -Thanks!

Friday, September 11 saw 11

brave souls set sail for the Emerald Isle where we were confronted by a well practiced and unfairly sober team of County Down golfers. The weather was perfect and the course at Royal Belfast, in immaculate condition, as we battled to keep possession of the Shield. Unfortunately it wasn't to be as we lost by a half point, 3pts - 2 1/2.

County Down Captain, Jamie McCune, reclaimed the spoils and thanked the Club and Course Manager for the use of the course and facilities.

As usual the match was played in good spirit and we all enjoyed meeting up once again.

Thanks to all the lads who made it such a great day and especially Terry Crawford for the arrangements for the weekend's golf and pub crawl (stagger?).

Our sincere thanks to Terry, and Clandeboye Golf Club, for allowing us to play the Ava Course on the Saturday and to enjoy the fine facilities. The food and drink were excellent and friendliness of the staff much appreciated.

Willie McMeiken, Turnberry, and Garry Ross, Royal Troon, have been chosen as the Patron's Award winners for this year and will receive a copy of Jim Arthur's book as well as the EDUCATIONAL! trip to Harrogate.

It was decided at the last Scottish board meeting to suspend the annual Patrons' Award Lunch for the time being, which is usually held in December. This action was taken in light of the current economic climate, with the hope being to direct contributions toward educational opportunities.

That's all for now folks!

Any news to denis.t@hotmail.co.uk or 07939 104701

Cheers!

Denis Tweddle



East

Hello members. I hope that you all have had a good golf season for your courses this year. And now it's all go with the winter programmes drainage, bunker renovations, new tees, re-turfing areas, tree pruning, etc etc, all in readiness for the next season. Great fun.

When do we ever get the time for all this and to squeeze some rounds of golf in! Well maybe for the lucky ones.

I don't think that I mentioned in my last report that James Neilson (Jimmy) donated a bit of silverware to be played for at our AGM. venue and, knowing Jimmy, he likes to do things in style. The prize? "The Claret Jug"! Jimmy wants more members to come along and support Our/Your Section. So young and old try and find the time to come along and have your say, play golf and listen to the gossip at the 19th.

All the dates and venues can be found on our Section News or by phoning any of the committee.

Our Section Autumn Outing was held at The Royal Burgess Golfing Society on Wednesday, September 30.

I must mention that the Royal Burgess is one of the oldest golfing societies in the world, dating back to 1735. Having played their golf firstly at Bruntsfield Links, in Edinburgh, and short spells at Muirfield, Bruntsfield and Royal Musselburgh, as these courses became over crowded they had to move. Then they found ground six miles to the west of Edinburgh and are there, to this day, at Barnton. It was looked over by Tom Morris who said it was a fine piece of land for a golf course and thus is was built. It opened for play in 1897.

We were very privileged to play the golf course, that has graced many big tournaments and royals over the years.

A total of 32 members attended, but with the weather closing in and the rain and dull day, only the hardy ventured out into the unknown..... All did make it back as the lights of the "Grand" Royal Burgess clubhouse was like a beacon for the lost souls who braved the day. We were lucky our group was playing behind our Secretary, Stuart Ferguson, who showed the way for us as he donned a brightly coloured jacket, which guided us home.

All the Winners from The Autumn Outing

Scratch: Dean Muir, Muirfield, 72 gross.

1st Class: Tom Murray, Ratho Park, 73 nett. 2. Bill Lyon, Muirfield 75 nett. 2nd Class: Jamie Donnet Murrayfield 87 nett; 2. John Geddes, Ellon, 88 nett. 3rd Class: George Oliver, Murrayfield, 78 nett; 2. Gary McKenna, Baberton, 83 nett; Veterans. Alister Holmes, Seahouses, 76 nett; Patrons'. Hugh Fraser, Huxley Golf, 69 nett. Novelty Prizes. Nearest the Pin. Stuart Ferguson, Dundas Parks. Longest Drive. Alister Holmes, Seahouses.

Our Chairman, Stewart Crawford, thanked Roger, the Course Manager and his greenstaff, the Captain and his committee at the Royal Burgess for having the East Section BIGGA. He also thanked the patrons for their support over the year and for the future.

Until next month.
Tom Murray



North

As I write this, the weather has definitely taken a turn for the worse. The cold mornings have started and even the odd ground frost has made an appearance. High winds have wreaked havoc with us, what with sand blowing out of the bunkers and trees falling all over the place and just when we get it all tidied up, along comes another day of high wind and we have to do it all over again.

It is very time consuming but

if the course isn't tidy you soon get told by the powers that be. Can you sort this out? Can you sort that out? Yes, but just add it to the rest of the other jobs on the list.

Hopefully by now you've all started to draw up your Winter programmes, if not already begun them. I know next door at Royal Aberdeen they've already started their retvetting duties. A total of 25 bunkers are being re done. They are also building a new championship tee at the 4th hole ready for the Walker Cup in 2011.

Hopefully, by now you will of all recovered from the Autumn outing at Alyth. I think that from the people I have spoken with, they all enjoyed their day thoroughly. By the looks of it there were a few sharks going about on the day too! Eh Niall. I wasn't there due to work commitments as was the Chairman, Hugh Mclatchie (just to give the rest of the committee a chance), but by all accounts Brian had the course looking good. On behalf of the Section I would like to pass on my thanks and congratulations to all at Alyth GC.

Nearest the Pin. Robert Paterson and Richard Pirie.

Sweep. 1. Niall Bruce; 2. Jim McCormack; 3. Kenny Liddell; 4. Gary McCandless
Guest Bill Harvie Trade Kenny Liddell, Committee Robert Hardie

Veterans 1. Jim McCormack; 2. George Simpson. Class 3. 1. Niall Bruce; 2. Dale Robertson; 3. Scott Davidson; Class 2 1. Jim McCormack; 2. David Middleton; 3. Kevin Spowart. Class 1. 1. Robert Hardie; 2. Simon Hoy; 3. Derek Green; Scratch; 1. Robert Patterson 2. George Mitchell

The Mark Main Trophy for the best two nett scores over the Spring and Autumn outings went to Kevin Spowart, of Royal Aberdeen. Well done, Kevin, and thank you for supporting the Section.

The 200 Club results are as follows: £30 Brian Cocker, Rosasco Macrae, Lindsey Johnstone £100 Stuart Robertson.

Having been away on holiday I came back to find out one of our members hasn't been too well. My old mate Richard "Dicky" Pirie, from Newmachar GC, has been a little under the weather and wish you a speedy recovery mate. A pint is long overdue mate.

Patrick Wood, from Newmachar, obviously fancies himself becoming a bit of a Forrest Gump later on in life. He didn't do his ambition any harm when he recently took part in the Great North Run down in Newcastle. I had to get clarification of this from his boss as previously he just gets the t-shirts and ends up not doing the race for one reason or another! Well done, Patrick, and I wonder what your next test is going to be.

That's it for this month, if any of you have any news or stories just drop me a line on the number below.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links
07813889374

Northern Region



North Wales

November already where does the time go! Best wishes go to any course that's holding a firework display we looked into the legal side of it and you need to start writing the hundreds of pages of risk assessments in May to get them done in time.

The autumn tournament took place on October 1, at Eaton Golf Club, with a happy field of players taking advantage of really well running greens and a beautiful course in exceptional weather.

The results are as follows: 1. Johnny Evans, Carden Park, 36 pts; 2. Iwan Jones, Eaton GC, 35 pts (home advantage there me thinks); 3. Paul Gator, of our next host course, Caldly GC, with 34 pts; 4. Steven Roberts, of Flint GC with 32 pts. Best guests were, 1. Alex Kegg, 39 pts; 2. Peter Parry, 34 pts. Trade prize went to Section Chairman, and everyone's friend, Terry Adamson. Nearest the Pin prizes went to Johnny Evans on the 11th green and Deiniol Gegid (please excuse me if I've got the name wrong I was writing this down over a very crackly phone line) on the 17th green.

We need to thank Gavin Clarke and his team for providing with such a magnificently kept course and the clubhouse staff for their warm welcome and the scrumptious food. As a

thank you the Section donated £50 to the Captain's Charity. As previously mentioned the Christmas tournament is taking place at Caldly Golf Club on November 2,6 the format is a four person team with a shotgun start at 10.30. This competition is always well attended so get your entry slips in early.

In local news Peter Maybury, of Vale of Llangollen Golf Club, and his wife, Caroline, celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary on the 18th of this month and I would like to thank her for the 20 mostly happy years we've spent together. That's about it so,

All the best until next month.
Pete Maybury Petemayb66@aol.com 07756001187
Johnny Evans
Johnny.evans@tesco.net



Sheffield

Hello again everyone,

We have finally reached the end of the season and will now be well into our winter programmes. I hope that everyone had a very successful season and despite the difficult economic times still provided excellent golf.

Our last competition was held at Sherwood Forest GC. I am sure everyone who attended would agree what a fantastic day we had. I would like to thank Kim and his staff for providing a wonderful course for us to play, it was a real pleasure. Thanks also to Glenn Sawyer, from Golf and Turf Machinery, for sponsoring the day and providing a fantastic prize table once again. The only disappointing thing to come from the day was the poor attendance of greenkeepers. I have heard a few things from reps on this matter and you do not have to attend lectures to be entitled to play golf. Please support your Section.

The results are as follows: 1. Simon Dye, 39pts, Hcp 5; 2. K. Aston, 38pts, Hcp 13; 3. R. Jones, 34pts, Hcp +1; Trade P. Fell, 35pts, Hcp 13.

The National Championship was held in early October and our Section had three representatives. Thank you to S. Dye, A. Unwin and R. Jones for representing the Section. Congratulations to Richard who finished

second. Well done, Richard.

One of our members has decided to put greenkeeping to one side for a while and is going on the trip of a lifetime. James Whelan, from Rotherham GC, is going travelling to Borneo for three months. Good luck, James and have a fantastic time.

Finally, our Christmas golf will be held at Rotherham GC on November 30, I hope to see many of you there. It will also be the AGM on the day as well. Hope you all have a good month and I will speak you in December.

James Stevens

Midland Region



Midland

Well I hope that by the time you read these notes that the majority of the downside of my favourite season has been cleaned up, the leaves. With that in mind please consider this month's calendar sponsor Abbey Mowers for your machinery requirements; www.abbeymowers.co.uk <<http://www.abbeymowers.co.uk/>>. Also I would like to mention that Bob Pilsbury/Mr Toro has eventually (65+) decided to retire. Bob worked at Abbey Mowers for the last 11 years and thoroughly enjoyed promoting his many red babies, as he had done so for 40 years. A leaving party was held for Bob at a local pub and Pete Mansfield, of Toro Lely, made a surprise visit and presented him with a selection of cut crystal. Mike Shaw also made a presentation and thanked him for his years of excellent service. From both the folks at Abbey Mowers and the Midland Section we wish you a long and fruitful retirement. Be careful on that Velocette, we don't want you falling off again Dick!

Over many a year we have been blessed with the superb courses that have been gracious enough to afford our tournaments. Yet again our Comp Sec has delivered beyond the call of duty. Such being on 4th December our Christmas event at Woburn, no less, entry being the princely sum of £30! You had better be quick to get your entrees into Gary if you have not already done so. I would give my

right arm to play there. Unfortunately my left hand may well be recovering from the knife. It's better than having claws though.

And now for the long awaited result of the Scotts Doubles event. The finalists were Richard Beacham & Gary Turner pitted against Ed Stant & Paul Woodham, the final winners being Paul & Ed after a contest that does not reflect the score of 6&4. The course was of course superb, and a special thank you to Nia Frost for taking the time to represent Scotts while on maternity leave. Good luck with that Nia. Also thanks to Nigel Tyler and Rhys Thomas for driving the contestants (well one could not expect Nia to travel so far when pregnant. There is still chivalry in our modern world). Our thanks to Scotts for their continued support of this long running event. So the question is who will be victorious next year? p.s. and surprisingly it was very windy on the day, really! What's this I hear, Gary, tweeting like a birdie, must be in love. Believe it or not, the boys at Harbourne will testify. Been there, done it.

Wind swept Mac.
Sean McDade



East Midlands

Hi All

The final of the inaugural Headland Pairs comp was played at The Grove in Hertfordshire during September; this was won by my partner – Paul Friith and I, one up against Glynn Buckby and Simon Banks. A fantastic day was had by all and here's hoping to an even better competition next year.

By the time you read this the Autumn comp and AGM will have taken place on October 15 at Matlock GC, let's hope this unseasonally good weather continues a bit longer!

Hot off the press – yesterday the annual East Mids vs Midlands match was played – sponsored by Rigby Taylor, at Trentham Park GC. The East Mids won by a score of 9 – 6. I think that makes it five years in a row the East Mids have been victorious – better luck next year guys! The day was played in

great spirits – as always by both sides and thanks has to go to Trentham Park and their Course Manager, Gary Cunningham, for the superb condition of the course.

Places in our Autumn Education day are filling up fast although at the time of writing there are still some available. The speakers during the day are Greg Evans, Paul Lowe, Frank Newberry and Andy Cole, of the STRI. For anyone interested please get in touch with myself ASAP on the e-mail below.

You should have all had a letter for the Christmas tournament by now to be played at Wollaton Park on December 8; we look forward to seeing you all there.

As always I can be contacted at biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com with any news or information.

Thanks for now.
Andy de Wet



Mid-England

Earlier this year the Section ran several educational courses for the benefit of our members. Eight guys achieved their certificates in Cross Cutting and Maintenance of Trees, Four chaps completed the Felling of Small Trees course and a further eight people qualified as First Aiders after their four day course. Funding is available again this year and next although no courses have been arranged thus far. If you are interested in First Aid, Spraying, Tree Maintenance or anything else that would be of use to you or your staff then please contact Gerald Bruce at Berkhamsted Golf Club.

Don't forget to get your entries in for the Turkey Trot at John O'Gaunt Golf Club on December 7 where we will be playing the Carthage Course. Please let Richard Saunders know as soon as possible as to whether you will be playing because it is always a very popular event and Richard would not like to have to disappoint you.

We are already looking for venues for next year and I will let you have the details as soon as venues/dates are confirmed.

Next month I hope to bring you the report from Mid-Herts GC, The National Tournament and a summary of our AGM. In the meantime, if you have any news, suggestions or thoughts please e-mail me at the address below.

Craig Spooner
craig.spooner@limagrain.co.uk

South West and South Wales Region



South Wales

Hi Everyone! Hope you are all well.

Well! What a difference a month makes! Following all that rain we then had the driest September for 12 years! All this gave Turf Managers the chance to do some well needed autumn renovation. So I'm sure your Sisis Auto Turfman had plenty of use and liberal amounts of Fisons Greenkeeper 2 was applied. Though I'm sure things may have changed since I was a Greenkeeper!

First the result of the match between the Greenkeepers and Secretaries, which was held at Neath GC. The course was presented in superb condition which was a credit to HGK (and Section Secretary) Steve Chappell and his staff. In a closely fought contest The Greenkeepers emerged victorious, winning 4 - 2 to retain the CWC Shield. The victorious team were: Andy Roach (Capt), Darryl Jones (Vice), Rhys Norville, Stuart Ross, Emyr Nickels, Gary Humphries, Gareth Knight, Colin Thomas, Clive Moran, James Cuell, Steve Chappell.

Thanks go out to: Alan Abel, Complete Weed Control, for his continued support of this annual match and for his hospitality at the bar and for providing wine with the meal and the whiskey for the N-T-P and L/Drive. Thanks to Neath Golf Club for the use of the facilities; Thanks to Wesley and Judith for providing really good three course meal enjoyed by all; Thanks to the GCMA for their company during the day and their continued efforts in

the matches against us. Green-keeping team at Neath: John Amos, Jason Davies, Meurig Lewis, Kerry (best mechanic in the Rhondda) Lewis.

Nearest the pin winners: Simon Buddville (Sec's); Bruce Nickalass (Sec's); John Sulley (Sec's); James Cuell (G/Keepers). Longest Drive: James Cuell (G/Keepers)

So well done the our lads and commiserations to the Secretaries. My advice to the Secs is to get some practice in! Not during work hours though!

RT Matchplay news now, and, at the time of writing I have been informed that Paul Handy and Rhys Norville recently beat the seemingly invincible duo of Gary Humphries and Rhys McDonagh to reach the final at 10B. Upon hearing this news 10B police, the local Indian restaurants and hotels breathed a sigh of relief. The local pubs however saw a potential bumper night fly out the window! The other semi final between Mark Wilshire/Mark Anderton v Daryl Bray/Leigh Davies has yet to be played but could see an all Newport GC final. It could turn nasty!

Talking about Newport GC, a big well done to Rhys Norville, who recently won The Toro Student Greenkeeper Of The Year Award. This is a great achievement and it's the first time that anyone from the Section has won this award. He's a talented golfer too! It's not fair! Well done, Rhys! I'm sure this award will stand you in good stead for the future.

Still on the subject of awards, if you remember, I mentioned that Dan Duffy, Head Groundsman at The Liberty Stadium, had recently won Championship Groundsman of the Year award, as awarded by the FA. Well, He topped that by being voted IOG Groundsman Of The Year, at Saltex, in September. So, a great year for Dan and thoroughly deserved. Shame about the teams that play there! Only joking!

On the trade front I would like to congratulate Peter Lacey, for joining Farmura Environmental and taking over from Gerald (The Great) Orme as their Technical Manager for South Wales. So Peter, or can we now call you 'Porthcawl Pete'? I think I can speak ferrosol when I say 'all the best' in your new job. I'm sure you will be a revolution!

Finally, if for some strange reason you were at the recent Scarlets v Munster game at Parc Y Scarlets, then no you weren't seeing things. It really was me cutting the pitch with a pedestrian rotary mower at the end of the game, closely (well not that closely) followed by three RT Reps. We all started at the same time but I think Peter and his mates must have been enjoying too many pastries at their numerous sales meetings recently and I ended up opening a commanding, if slightly squiffy lead! I was absolutely cream crackered at the end though. The things we do for a free seat!

That's all for now. A report on the Autumn Golf Meeting and AGM at Southerndown GC will appear in next month's Around The Green.

Anything that you would like mentioned in this column, you know, weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs, hilarious mishaps then please contact me on:

celticceri@aol.com
07831 168645
Ceri Richards



South Coast

Welcome to the November Around the Green, your committee have decided to spice things up a little in the form of each committee member taking a turn at guest writing this column over the coming months starting with yours truly. So go easy on us, as we are all new to this journalism lark.

At the last committee meeting it was decided due to the continual drop in numbers for our golf outings that we will return to the old system of mailing out an application form to each individual member, rather than the e-mails which seems to have been a bit hit & miss. There is a considerable cost to this but it was felt if we can increase numbers at the outings then it would be money well spent.

On the application form we are asking for monies to be paid in advance of the event this is to help the committee with confirmed numbers and reducing the need to handle lots of cash on the day (remember it's the tournament convenors' day out

as well). We hope you will assist us with this.

We are considering setting up a system for payment through Internet banking as well as cheques. Your thoughts on whether this would be of use to you would be appreciated.

Autumn Outing. On Thursday, October 1, the Section held our autumn outing at Shanklin & Sandown GC, on the Isle of Wight. All who attended had a fantastic day and many thanks must go to Course Manager, Paul Knight, and his staff for the excellent condition of the course and also to the Captain and Council for allowing us the courtesy of the course.

Our thanks also to our sponsors of the day Avoncrop Amenity and Rigby Taylor these days would be so much harder to organise without your continued support, and a special thanks to Dave Rogers for looking after us all on the ferry crossing.

Again our numbers were very low and as this day was free as previously advertised the committee really are stumped as to how we can get the numbers up, so if you have any ideas please let us know.

Scores. 1. Joe Cooper, 38pts; 2. Chris Bitten, 35pts; 3. Ian Noble, 34pts 4. Robert Hogarth, 33pts; 5. Kevan Glass 33pts; 6. Tim Harper, 32pts.

Nearest the Pin. Joe Cooper. Longest Drive. Ian Noble

Your AGM was held on the same day, there were no changes to the committee and the main topics discussed are the ones mentioned already in these notes.

Here at Remedy Oak we have just completed our hollow-coring, overseeding and top-dressing programme, I, am grateful that August and September have been so much better weather wise I would have hated to go into Autumn with the levels of rainfall we seen in July. Saying that, I cannot remember a season with so much pests and disease around we have had the lot with dollar spot being a huge problem on fairways, and I know from speaking to other guys some off you have suffered from anthracnose on greens. Bad enough in winter or early spring but attacks during the summer is pretty tough going.

Typical that we get all these attacks in a year when we are all trying to trim costs and

now we are having to use more chemicals than normal to tackle the problem. I don't know what the answer is but somehow our industry needs to find a way of narrowing the gap in costs between the chemicals we use and their equivalent within agriculture.

Things on the education front are quiet at the moment but I do know Sparsholt College recently held an awards evening for the latest group of Greenkeepers to qualify to NVQ Level II, so congratulations to all of you.

If any one has queries or problems you think the Section can help you with or should know about give me a ring or e-mail on the details below and we will try and help.

Next month's guest columnist is Phil "Joe" Cooper, from Milton Abbey School, so if you have anything of interest or thoughts on what I have talked about in these notes please give me a ring on - 07879 424737 or e-mail hogiethehun@aol.com. And I will pass it on to "Agadoo".

Happy Greenkeeping
Robert Hogarth
Remedy Oak



South West

Sadly - getting quite close to my last report now - in fact this is it! Unfortunately, not too much going on just now, and not much feedback from elsewhere, but hey - you know me - before I bow out, I'll take a few moments to reminisce on events since 2004 when I started writing this column.

My report from Feb '05, at Weston Super Mare, leapt off the page. I can't think of Weston Super Mare without the old Aedge Cutler song springing to mind. However, this day was so cold with a bitter wind and snow flurries that Afge's Wurlitzer would've frozen solid, and even the seagulls were sitting in a gloomy huddle outside the travel agents in the middle of town. I closed that report by wishing Richard Whyman, then incoming BIGGA Chairman, all the best for his year in office. Kinda déjà-vu there then!

And later that year, there was no escape from the pressures of

work – I'd sneaked into the local pub on the way home and someone bellowed "Oi. I want a word with you" – (Bob the Barman) sounding unusually belligerent. "I want to make a complaint – I was playing round the Common yesterday, and your blokes were there shovelling cow pats off the fairway. I got into that nasty little quarry on the 10th and had four or five shots trying to get out (not much of a golfer, Bob the barman) when one of your blokes handed me this horrible old shovel with cow muck dripping off it and said "Ere, 'ave a go with this" and then split his sides laughing." "Sorry Bob," I muttered – "S'pose a free pint's out of the question?"

A really sad story cropped up in summer 2006 - Four players came into the clubhouse bar at one of our local clubs after an evening game. One of them was bragging loudly about encountering an adder on one of the fairways and actually chopping its head off with his sand iron. Apparently there was a little old guy listening at the other end of the bar, and he asked how long this particular snake had been. "Well over two foot-six, grandad" came the smug reply, "or at least it was until it met me - har har" "Do you realise," continued the elderly gent, "if that adder really was two foot six inches long, it was well over 80 years old, and you've just killed it with a golf club for no good reason at all". There was complete silence - the bravado just melted away, and the golfer was apparently inconsolable.

In 2007 there was a nasty explosion at one of the chemical works at Avonmouth (30miles to the south). The police rang at lunchtime to inform us that a cloud of potentially toxic chemicals had been released into the atmosphere, and was heading our way so we'd be well advised to clear the course. We toured around advising players of the situation and offering lifts back in. Yep, you've guessed it – most of those faced with a choice between near-certain death, and missing their afternoon's golf, decided to risk it and play on. One player however, sniffed the air and said – "Yes – I thought there was a funny smell – quick, take me in". We did so, but I didn't have the heart to tell him that he what he could actually smell was the TX10 fertiliser

we'd put on the greens the day before!

I also had a nasty experience on the course. Standing by our lake in a quiet moment I noticed a snow-white swan soaring through the air to make a magnificent landing on the water. I was just thinking "wow" - when my mobile rang (unfortunately not a nice purr-purr ringtone, but an annoying beedle-beedle-beep). This enraged the swan, which emerged from the lake, wings beating and hissing menacingly towards me. I'm now in full retreat, and for some reason, still trying to take the call. When I finally got the phone near enough to my ear to hear I realized there was an even bigger menace on the line – Angela – from Alpha (name changed) Paints. I could just make out disjointed phrases like "order six cases before Xmas" and "15% discount". "I'm terribly sorry" I blurted, "but I'm out on the course, and I'm having a little difficulty with a swan". "Oh dear" muttered Angela – obviously miffed that I'd deflected her sales patter – "a swan – what is it?" "Well", I panted – "it's a stonking great white thing with a wing at each corner, and at the moment it's running across the grass towards me". "My God" said Angela, (now sounding quite concerned) – "You want to watch out for that – they're strong enough to break your arm". "I couldn't care less about my arm" I bellowed, "it's certain other parts of my anatomy I'm more worried about" – and then she hung up. Women!

Okay – enough. The Section held its 2009 Autumn Tournament and Annual General Meeting at Saltford Golf Club in early October. Course Manager Darren Moxham, Lucy Sellick and Matt Devlin were the undoubted stars of the day – the course was in fantastic condition with scarcely a blade of grass out of place, and yet due to illness, these are the only three greenkeepers currently available to work on it. They are my heroes, and definitely win this year's prize for Course Presentation. Thanks very much guys we really appreciated it. The competition results were as follows - 1. Matt Worster, Minchinhampton, 42pts; 2. Simon Kew, Shirehampton, 40pts; 3. Darren Moxham, Saltford, 39pts.

The AGM itself was held



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

Firstly, I would like to welcome Jill to the Team at Headquarters, she joins the Sales Department following the departure of Sharon in July.

Her arrival is very timely with work on Harrogate Week starting to pick up pace. The exhibition is filling up nicely and as with everything it could be a lot better, but I do feel that in the present climate it could also have been a lot worse!

Learning and Development is a major part of what BIGGA is about and watch out elsewhere in this edition of Greenkeeper International for details of the show seminars. A quick reminder that full information on these, and all aspects of Harrogate Week including exhibitors, can be found on www.harrogateweek.org.uk which can also be accessed through a link on the home page of the BIGGA website.

Many of you will be aware that the Association has been approached by Pitchcare with a view to working together on the development of a new trade show that would embrace all of sports turf and sports facility maintenance and management. Based on surveys that they have carried out, they believe that this is what the industry would support and their suggestion is that we consider a change of venue from Harrogate - their preferred option being the NEC, in Birmingham.

This proposal was considered by the BIGGA Board at its meeting in October and, for the avoidance of any continued speculation, I wish it to be made clear that at this moment in time the Board do not wish to pursue the matter any further. The Association is committed to building on the existing success of Harrogate and while the current two show position (Harrogate and SALTEX) may not be ideal for some companies, it never-the-less provides a workable compromise.

While on the subject of rumours I would also like to clarify the position between BIGGA and the IoG. Merger talks may have broken down at the end of 2007 but the two organisations are not at odds with each other. BIGGA's move earlier this year to allow sports turf groundsmen to join as Full Members was not an act of confrontation merely a natural extension of its business following the recognition of the synergy between greenkeeper and groundsman. I am in communication with Geoff Webb, CEO of the IoG, and we are looking at what, if any, common issues can be addressed by working together. This is no different to the approach that I am taking with other CEO's.

Within the sports industry there is a great deal of Best Practice that can be shared and it's long overdue that we all sat down and helped each other!

There is a meeting of Section Secretaries planned to take place at the end of November at Headquarters and this is an opportunity for members to have their views brought to the attention of the Staff. Market research and feedback is important and over the coming weeks we will be sending out surveys to certain groups of the membership. Please take time to respond and thereby help us to improve the value of being a member.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Pemberton'.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive

outdoors on the veranda overlooking the 18th green. 24 members and trade attended, and Adam Matthews and Jamie Acton joined the Section Committee as Secretary & Assistant Regional Rep respectively. A warm welcome was extended to them both. It was agreed to reinstate the Greenkeeper Amateur Tournament for next year, and Chairman, Chris Sealey, closed the meeting by thanking the Section Patronage Partners for their continuing support in difficult times, and reminded members of the importance of being as active as possible within the Association.

As mentioned above – Adam Matthews is taking over from me as Section Sec. Adam is a wonderful guy who will do really well. Please do give him your support by making the transition as easy as possible. I'm still on the Section Committee, and I intend to assist Adam in ensuring that education is available to all Section members. In this regard - I'm speaking at a Safety Seminar at Wiltshire County Hall on November 19. The day is in response to a number of accidents on golf courses in recent months. Invites will be circulated shortly - do please make an effort to attend, Jon Allbutt is the main speaker and always worthy of taking time out. This opportunity, along with the likes of the recent Manual Handling and Chainsaw Courses, which BIGGA is pleased to part-sponsor, are so important to help us all in our daily lives.

Finally – thanks for reading my column over the last five years – I've really enjoyed writing it, (but am probably going to have to change my style somewhat in the Chairman's column). Please read that also – BIGGA appreciates your support – it is after all your Association.

On a parting note - should you happen to have read elsewhere that Associations are yesterday's news and on their way out, then let me reassure you – "YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET". Watch this space!

Paul Worster



Surrey

No icebergs, so I'm back from cruising the Baltic, complete with parrot and large Jolly Roger. Only two bad sea days and the rest dry and sunny. The cruise was excellent, the ship, the food and the excursions to foreign cities all first class. If that ship had been hit by an iceberg, the country would have saved millions from its pension bill as the OAPs on board were everywhere.

I have just been informed that the Surrey Bowl was won by Ron Christie and Roger Tydeman, beating Dave Worsfold and Martyn McEnroy, at Foxhills GC. Thanks to Roger for running the competition and I am sure there was nothing dubious about the fact that he also helped to win it.

The annual Cresta Cup competition took place at Wimbledon Park GC, on September 17. Many thanks to Wimbledon Park GC and Dave Langheim, for the course was in excellent condition, including the very quick greens. Mark Harvey came first, followed by Tony Bremer and in third place, Chris Lomas. Nearest the Pin. Sean Sturrock, Longest Drive. Chris Lomas.

Sadly Paul Skinner, 32 years as First Assistant at Malden GC died in August. Alex Armitage said Paul was just 60 years old and had been at the club for 44 years. Condolences from Surrey Section to his family.

Paul Hutton celebrates 25 years service at Hankley Common GC and Gareth Roberts would like him to know that due to his amassed experience, he need now only rake bunkers on odd days and to keep even days for strimming.

The South East Regional Seminar is at Reigate Hill GC on Thursday, November 12. Will any latecomers contact Clive Osgood, the South East Region administrator, on 07841 948410.

The Captain of HMS Braemar, the ship that carried me to the Baltic, would give us a daily report, which always ended with the reassuring phrase 'all is well' and so like him I end this month's report - All is Well.

Brian Willmott



Kent

Autumn. A time to reflect on the season's highs and lows, your successes and failures and how you managed to maintain your courses in another year of extreme weather. There is a lot to be gained from reflection on how we all manage our courses differently in increasingly difficult conditions. And I don't just mean the extreme dry weather this year playing a major part in making our courses in this region less attractive than normal, the recession means that golfers are more demanding and will not pay a green fee unless they can justify its value.

Travelling to neighbouring courses and discussing strategies with like-minded individuals at our golf days has proved to be very influential in dictating my approach to course set up and we have had a good year as a result. Reflective analysis now means that you can be well prepared for future years.

Nobody knows everything, but between us we probably have most bases covered. Although the basic principles of greenkeeping are the same wherever you go, we all have different strategies and priorities in how we achieve an end result. I have never yet met a fellow professional who was not happy to discuss his methods in achieving what he had produced as sharing knowledge is a easy way to improving everybody's courses. At our golf days, the best greenkeepers and tradesmen in the county are all gathered regularly for a light-hearted event, but I often hear people asking each other about particular problems they are experiencing and what others have done to overcome them. Answers are readily given and management practices tweaked at the earliest opportunity in order to utilise the new-found knowledge.

Sometimes we all have to justify going to our Section events to ourselves (during busy periods), or to our employers who regard our golf days as just that. Personally, I believe that I would be failing in my job if I did not utilise all such opportunities to network with some of the best

professionals in the county and steal as much of their knowledge as possible in order to ensure the future of my course. I'm told that in the five years that I have been involved with running the Kent Section that over 90 different greenkeepers and related tradesmen have joined us at various events all of whom have a story to tell. Make the most of what's on offer, especially if it's free and so readily available.

Redlibbits Golf Club provided just such an opportunity recently and Ken Morris's dramatic improvements to the course in such a short space of time were inspirational to all. A combination of professional turf and woodland management practices has quickly resulted in a very attractive course and an environmentally sound area. A family of Moor hens had nested in a newly created habitat on the side of the lake in front of the first tee. Unfortunately, David Ray's errant opening drive reduced their population to the tune of one, but we won't mention that.

Superior local knowledge was paramount to the days golfing successes as the ever-entertaining Kev Morris, very undiplomatically, won the day with 42 points. Second was Darren Burton, from North Foreland, on 40 and third was Kev's very able assistant at Redlibbits, Mark Roach with 39 points. Longest Drive was won, as usual, by Darren Burton and Nearest the Pin, by Tom Mutch.

In just a couple of weeks now, November 26 to be exact, is our final get together of the year for the Turkey Trot at Birchwood Park. This will also include our AGM at some point of the evening so please come along if you have issues to raise or let us know by letter if there is a constitutional issue you would like us to address. This is always a great day with a lot of fun elements and prizes as well as all of the opportunities discussed above.

We also have a full and very exciting fixture list for next year which shall be distributed on the night. If any of you wish to host an event in coming years please let us know. We have had some great days over the years at courses which I didn't know existed until we went there. This county has so much to offer in terms of its venues and custodians of the land and

this is constantly reminded to me whenever a new venue is visited.

We have a lot going for us in Kent. Make the most of it.

Best of British
Rob Holland



Essex

Sorry about the lack of last month's news, due to an excessive workload at home and work it got missed out of my itinerary.

Cannons Brook Golf Club, back in August, and what a fine day greeted us. Warm, but not too warm, and a course that we have not played before. It was a challenge to say the least, as we had no idea of the layout. The course was fantastic condition and some of the holes were a real challenge with blind shots and trees that made you wonder if there was enough room to place the ball on the fairway (if it was there at all). A big thanks to Graham Lapwood and his team for a presentation, to be proud of. Our thanks to Cannons Brook for allowing us to play and to the catering staff for a fine meal. Also to the trade members for supporting us, with fine prizes for the raffle table. Finally to the players that made the long haul West.

Prizes went to the following players.

Overall winner and 2009 National Championship place. Nick Gates.

Div. 1. 1. Andy Cracknell; 2. Paul Hollingsway. Div. 2. 1. Stuart Rogers; 2. Ray Clark. Guest, Steve Butler. Trade, Mark Keysell. Nearest the Pin, Roy Sprong. Longest Drive, Stuart Rogers

Stapleford Abbots was our next port of call at the end of September, with some fine golf to boot. The course was really in great condition, seeing the long dry spell we have just had. Course Manager Paul and his team produced some of the most consistent greens I've played on for a long while, though there are quite a few ponds and lakes lurking out there to catch the unwary. Thanks to the Stapleford Abbots for allowing us to play and to the chef for a fine carvery.

Overall winner and 2010 National Championship place. Stuart Rogers, 40 pts

Div. 1. 1. James Lilly, 39 pts; 2. Tom Bownes, 36 pts. Div. 2.1. Mark Hollingsworth, 39 pts; 2. Malcolm Smith, 38 pts. Guest & Trade Prize, Matt Wise. Nearest the Pin, Tom Bownes. Longest Drive, Tom Bownes

Back in July I spent six very pleasant days at Turnberry, for the Open Championship, working on the BIGGA Support team. What an absolutely fantastic experience, not only being out there with some of the best players in the world. But also the ambiance between my fellow greenkeepers, not only on the Support team, but also with the Turnberry staff as well. The course was fantastic (the TV cameras did not lie). The early mornings and the long days did nothing so spoil my enjoyment, even down to the 420-mile journey each way. I was even up at 5am on the Tuesday after my return to resume my normal work (though, thank God, there was no rake propped against my office door).

Our next event is the AGM and winter team event, so make up your teams, there must be two BIGGA in a team of four. Entry forms on the web site soon.

Finally, the AGM. It's time to elect your committee, this year the Chairman and Secretary have both resigned from office due to work and family commitments, so we are looking for members who are willing to join the committee and work towards improving the section both in membership and stature. All officers of the committee are up for re-election and anyone wishing to be nominated should contact Martin Forrester no later than Monday, November 23 which will be the day that you also need to have any items that you wish brought up at the meeting, with the secretary.

Contact for Martin. 07984-867939 or mdwforrester@hotmail.com

If you do have any news for the website or for Greenkeeper International, please contact me on 07764 862 337 or via email essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer



Rosslare Golf Club Vacancy 'Head Green-keeper'



Applications are invited for the position of Head Green-keeper at Rosslare Golf Club, Co. Wexford, Ireland.

Rosslare Golf Club is a long established private members golf club, founded in 1905, comprising 2 courses with associated practice range, putting and chipping greens. We are situated in the South East corner of Ireland in the village of Rosslare on a narrow sandy peninsula fringing Wexford harbour.

The 'Old Course' is an 18hole Hawtree and Taylor par 72 layout of 6786 yards. The 'Burrow' course, opened in 1990 is a 12 hole par 46 layout of 3956 yards designed by Christy O'Connor Jnr. Both courses are situated on typical 'links' land.

The vacancy arises due to the planned retirement in 2010 of our long serving head green-keeper. We are now seeking applications from persons who are interested in the position and can demonstrate strong abilities in all aspects of green-keeping in a 'links' environment.

The successful candidate will be capable of organizing, motivating and managing the green-keeping team and must bring a high standard of presentation to the links. Candidate's will ideally possess all relevant green keeping qualifications, will have a history of success in a similar position and will

- Be able to implement Health and Safety and other relevant legislation.
- Understand and assist in the preparation of an annual budget and manage the agreed budget.
- Motivate, manage and supervise the green-keeping team.
- Implement a plan for the establishment of a sustainable environmentally friendly course.
- Prepare and implement training plans to meet the needs of the existing staff.
- Manage and maintain the course machinery including an automated irrigation system.

The salary for this position is negotiable.

Closing Date for applications is Nov. 20th 2009

Applications in writing including a full CV to

The Hon. Secretary, Rosslare Golf Club, Rosslare, Co Wexford

Tel:- +353 53 91 32203

e-mail :- manager@rosslaregolf.com

website:- www.rosslaregolf.com

The Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh



Head Greenkeeper

- Manage all aspects of the course and clubhouse surroundings to the highest standards (including preparation, presentation, maintenance and improvements)
- Line manage, motivate and develop training programmes for an experienced team of greenkeepers

The Person

- Qualified, as a minimum to NVQ level 3 or equivalent in sports turf management
- Proven record in leadership and man management skills with experience of maintaining a parkland style course with typical soil conditions to a high standard
- Able to demonstrate a knowledge of basic construction methods to carry out general improvements to a golf course
- A fine eye for attention to detail

Salary and benefits will be by negotiation dependent upon experience and qualifications.

Please apply by e-mail or in writing with a full CV to: Mr Richard Fletcher, Fletcher Jones Ltd, 12 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2DP. 044 (0)131 229 7151; E-mail: apply@fletcher-jones.co.uk

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