

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



Ayrshire

Hello all, what a week at Turnberry! Tiger misses the cut after being 2 to 1 to win and Tom Watson comes inches away from golf immortality!

Working in the midst of such a massive operation was exciting and a challenge dodging all the ropes, vehicles and people about the place. We started at 4am to set the course in front of the golf, finishing about 7am for the majority. Luckily the weather was dry and we were free to eat, sleep or watch golf (nae drink!) till 6pm when we would meet to plan the evening's work, mainly cutting greens, divotting, tidying tee areas and blowing loose grass and sand from around greens and walkways. It was a real buzz, the days just became a blur and then it was all over!

We were all pleased that the course proved a challenge to the best in the world, even on the Thursday when conditions were ideal for low scores. The wind picked up a bit for the rest of the week and the Ailsa became a real test. With so much dependent on the weather for a good 'Open' I think we were lucky!

All at Turnberry were especially pleased to see George's last Open be such a success, with great comments from the R&A, Golf Writers, Greenkeepers, Golf fans and the players! As anyone who knows George knows that no-one deserved it more!

I'm sure we'll all still see George on a regular basis but on behalf of the Ayrshire Section, we wish you a long and happy retirement, maybe get that handicap down now you're not stuck in the office?

A couple of years ago I was

lucky enough to travel to Harrogate with George and on the way back we found we had to detour because of an accident. Anyway George got to saying how he was worried about this after dinner speech he was to make and what he would talk about (hard to believe, I know!). So George starts telling these stories from his earliest days in greenkeeping to the present and I was gutted to have to get out the car four hours later with a sore jaw from laughing! Ask him about the one about the General and the stuttering caddie when you see him! I think that speech went okay, by the way! All the best, George!

Our trip to County Down, the weekend of Sept 11, is looking good with all spaces filled and only a couple of deposits still to come in. I'm looking forward to the match as we had such a great time in Bangor the last time!

Remember we've the Autumn Outing at Powfoot GC on Thursday, October 1, so get it in the diary and see ya there!

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

Dennis Tweddle



Central

As you read this, the golf season will be drawing to a close but we still have the autumn outing to look forward to on September 17. Hopefully you will have returned your entry form well before now and we have a good turnout at Crieff. When you are trying to run events, things are much easier if you know in advance what support you have and the committee would urge everyone to plan ahead and commit at the earliest possible opportunity as it is vital for budgeting purposes and

making organisational arrangements.

This is particularly true with regards to the Ecology Course we are staging at Gleneagles on November 17 and 18. We have committed a substantial outlay to the STRI for putting this course on and with Gleneagles Hotel for the rooms and food for both days so we need your support. To attend the same course at Bingley would cost each attendee something in the region of £300 plus another £300 for travel and accommodation. We are staging almost the exact same course but tailored to our situation for less than a third of that price and including food. We have a few people confirmed already but ideally we are looking for between the 25 to 30 people attending to break even. Full details are on the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk or contact any committee member to book your place,

Gordon Moir



North

Stop press - Stuart Robertson of Craigie Hill Golf Club was 40 on August 12. I didn't really think he was that old but I played with him at Portlethen back in May and he was swinging it like a 40 year old. Well done Stuart and I'm sure it doesn't hurt too much...yet. Information supplied by Anon.

John Geddes and Dale Robertson were both fortunate enough to be a part of, The Open Support Team at Turnberry back in July and they have asked to thank BIGGA for the opportunity. They said it was very memorable and they would recommend it to people who are thinking of applying in the future.

This is the last month that you can put your name down for the Autumn outing at Alyth. We are hoping for a good turnout. If you haven't already got your name down then Dale Robertson, of Newmachar Golf Club, is the man you should be speaking to. He will answer any questions and queries that you have regarding the outing. It takes place on September 17 and I've already been receiving phone calls from people keen to go, so let's hope we can put the pressure on Brian Cocker by some healthy numbers.

Peterculter Golf Club have recently employed a new apprentice by the name of Andrew Scott. I'm sure Paul and Mark will look after you. I can't help thinking though that you have a hard act to follow after the last apprentice there. What was his name again? Good Luck and hope you enjoy it.

Finally this month the Norrie Wytock Trophy was being played on August 20. Hopefully we can do something this year. There will be a report to follow in next month's article. That's all the news I have for this month. I presume everyone is busy and keeping themselves out of trouble. That's the best way. Remember don't hesitate to give me a shout on 07813889374 if you have anything to put in future editions. Cheers

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links

Northern Region



North Wales

September must be most parents' favourite month because no matter how much you love your children you're really glad

to pack them back off to school after a summer under your feet! Likewise we pack the competitive season off this month with club finals days approaching, but do we actually get an off season? Summer competitions end, then we're into turkey trots, then the winter competitions kick in just to finish in time for the summer season to start again. Goodness, writing it down like this I'm starting to feel we're on a bit of a treadmill!

This month is normally the start of our autumn growth flush but with July containing more rain than the previous months combined we've been in flush for two months already (God help us).

The Autumn Tournament and Annual General Meeting takes place at Eaton Golf Club (CH3 7PH) on October 1. I hope we have as good a turnout as we have had in previous years.

In local news Dave Lewis, Course Manager, at Conwy Golf Club, celebrates 30 years working in greenkeeping this month, I'm sure all of us reading this send congratulations to you for your resilience and loyalty to our, what can be a hard but yet very rewarding, career choice and Jon Paul Wood, of Carden Park, is taking his experience to Australia this month by taking up a position at the Australian Golf Club, in Sydney, and I've been asked by the greens staff at Carden Park to send him their best wishes on his new venture.

That's about it for this month I hope to have a bit more for October's column so.

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



North West

The Section is arranging a two day essential management skills course for two days in November the details of which will be in the next magazine. We will need a minimum of six students and a maximum of 12 so please get your names down as soon as possible. The more students that attend the less it will cost to run.

The Autumn Tournament will take place at Mere Golf and Country Club on Tuesday,

October 13. We have the tee from 12.09 to 1.30pm. There will be soup and sandwiches on arrival and a meal and presentation after. Numbers are limited so please send your application in quickly.

The cost will be £25 please send a cheque payable to BIGGA North West Section for £25 to Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Billy can be contacted on mobile number 07985175825.

The 2009 BIGGA Whitelaw Bowl will take place at Penrith Golf club on Wednesday, September 9. This event is kindly sponsored by Rigby Taylor, if you wish to play please contact Phil Dewhurst. Phil can be contacted on mobile no. 07768180604.

Chris Sheehan



North East

On August 4 the North East Section played host to the Inter Section golf tournament sponsored by Alan Law, of Whitemoss Quarry, for the Whitemoss Trophy at Hexham Golf Club in Northumberland. This was contested also by the following Sections of the Northern Region; Cleveland, Northern, Sheffield and the North West. Unfortunately the North Wales Section were unable to produce a team.

Thanks must go to the sponsors of the competition and to Hexham Golf Club for giving courtesy of the course and to the Captain, Colin Pearson, for presenting the prizes to the winning team and runners-up and, not forgetting, the catering staff for the excellent evening meal and, of course, our own Regional Administrator, Peter Larter, for all their hard work. Also to Mal Lathan, Head Greenkeeper, and his staff for providing us with a testing course in prime condition I'm sure all the competitors enjoyed themselves on the day.

The winning team was the North East Section which had a bit of an advantage with one member of staff and another who used to play there when he was a junior and they were as follows: Jimmy Richardson, Simon Harding and Jordan Gibson with a total nett score of 222; runners-up were the Northern 225; Sheffield 228

as you can see only six shots separated those three teams. I only have one more thing to say is thanks for making the effort to travel up here lads it was much appreciated not only by me but my Captain and Hexham Golf Club committee.

Autumn golf comp. at Wear-side on October 14. Best wishes to Jordan Gibson, of Northumberland GC, who is playing in the National Championship in October at Burnham and Berrow.

Jimmy Richardson



Cleveland

It is with sad regret that I have to report the sad passing away of John Hinton last month. John was the Head Greenkeeper at Barnard Castle Golf Club. He will be sadly missed by his family and friends and our thoughts are with them.

Some other news to report now.

Well done to Tim Pearson, at Richmond GC, on passing his NVQ level 2 in Sports Turf Maintenance. Tim attended Askham Bryan College at York. Well done

Congratulations also to Martin Corner on reaching the regional finals of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year award for the second year running. The regional interview finals were held in York, and Martin was one of 43 regional finalists out of 3,500 across the UK and Ireland. Martin, who is Head Greenkeeper at Stressholme G.C, in Darlington, was nominated by Houghall College while doing his NVQ Level 3.

Martin Woods along with his Premier League standard bunker raking skills "because we Championship boys just don't have what it takes" donned his boots and grabbed his rake and headed up to Scotland with the BIGGA Support Team to help at The Open at Turnberry. Well done mate.

Some dates for your diary.

The autumn golf tournament will be Held at Durham City GC on Wednesday, October 7. Rigby Taylor is kindly sponsoring the day and there will be lots of good prizes. These days are very popular so book early to avoid disappointment. Tee off time is between 10 and 11am. The

price is £15 for golf and a meal. Try getting that anywhere else! Please send a cheque for £15 payable to Cleveland BIGGA. Mark the envelope for Ian Pemberton, 6 Rosewood Court, Marton, Middlesbrough, TS7 8QR.

Lloyd Ltd has invited the Cleveland section to their open day at Rockcliffe Hall on September 22.

Invites from Alistair will be sent out in September.

Finally, as I write this article a promotion leaflet has popped through the letter box from Lloyd Ltd.

It appears that Bishop Auckland Golf Club has hired a top male model to pose with their new purchases. I think it's a shame Phil couldn't have his picture taken. Never mind there will be time later on to have one with a moleskin smoking jacket on!

That's all for now.

Kevin Scarce



Sheffield

What a month August has been so far, I'm sure you will all have been very busy as the grass has just not stopped growing. As the golfers say, at least it keeps us quiet!

On the Section front we have played in two competitions over the last month. Unfortunately we lost in our Annual match against the Northern Section. May I thank Warwick and his staff at Abbeydale for the fantastic course they provided for both sides. Thanks also to Rigby Taylor for once again sponsoring the event.

In the Inter-Region event which was held in the North-east this year we came a very respectable third. If many of you don't know about this event, it is in its second year and all northern Sections enter three players to play in the competition. We send our three main competition winners. Well done lads.

Everything else in the Section is running well, later this month we will be starting to organise our winter lectures. Everyone will be informed when we have dates finalised. If anyone needs any advice or information about golf competitions or lectures please don't hesitate to contact me.

Around The Green

Lastly, I would like to congratulate Ian and his staff at Hillsborough for winning, as it seems every competition held at Hillsborough this year. Whenever I speak to Ian he tells me that they have won another golf competition!

Oh, and well done Barnsley for scraping a point at Hillsborough last week.

James Stevens



Midland Region

East of England

Sunshine and heat waves, the stuff summers are made of. Think we had all forgotten that after the past few years. You only need to look back at figures that show this year being a couple of degrees warmer on average than last year, and 200mm less rainfall than this time in 2008 to know it is a great deal better. You can't beat being outside in shorts and t-shirt mowing or hand watering with the sun on your back. I am sure that is the first thing which attracts the majority of greenkeepers to the job in the first place.

As I write this we have just had 6mm of rain in 10 minutes. Makes the last four hours of hand watering seem so worthwhile!

The onset of August heralds the peak of the playing season for all. Here at Immingham we have major club competitions and open events spaced out every other weekend from the beginning of July until the middle of September. This means we have to be in top condition all the time but does afford us every other week to ease off and not put too much pressure on ourselves. It does however make the summer fly by and before we know it the hollow cores will be out for autumn renovation again.

Not content with the quiet life, during July I both turned 30 and moved house! My whole life is currently being packed up into boxes all around the house, an amazing achievement when you consider the amount of junk you build up over time. I am sure I can bore you all over the coming few months with the trials of new carpets and tiled

floors, followed by bathroom and fireplace replacements. And that is before I borrow the hedge cutter and attack my new garden!

Our June golf day was held at Kenwick Park Golf Club, in Louth. A nice sunny morning tempted everyone into wearing shorts, however the weather soon changed to cloudy with quite a cold wind, those that hadn't brought their trousers regretted it. The golf course was set up in excellent condition for us by Geoff and his team and we were treated to an excellent meal of fish and chips in the clubhouse afterwards which always goes down well. The day was sponsored by Rigby Taylor who once again provided an excellent array of prizes for us.

The results were as follows

Division 1. 1. L. Hackett - another "home" winner!; 2. Graeme Macdonald - spelt your name right finally!; R. Bemment. Division 2. 1. C. Wilkinson; 2. R. Sandilands; 3. A. Kitchenson Trade Prize I. Collett, Nearest the Pin 2nd G. MacDonald

Nearest the Pin 17th A. Martin. Best score on par three's R. Portess

Once again thanks to all at Rigby Taylor and Kenwick Park Golf Club. Also personal thanks to Phil Wilkinson for letting me be his passenger in his buggy for the afternoon. Having not played there before I hadn't realised how undulating the course was so the ride around was greatly appreciated.

Our next golf event is on Friday, August 14, at Abbotsley Golf Club and is our annual Greenkeepers vs Trade match. Once again the two team Captains, Allan Walker and Gary Cooper, have been verbally sparring for months while trying to raise their best teams possible to do battle on the day. This year's match has a bit more needle to it after the trade victory in 2008 ended the greenkeepers stranglehold on the event. Tee off is about 1pm, but be there before to enjoy the banter. Allan and Gary will be contacting greenkeepers and trade respectively to organise their teams. I wish the greenkeepers all the best because unfortunately our invitation day is the day after and therefore, will not be able to attend.

Congratulations to Rob Bemment, Assistant Greenkeeper here at Immingham on becoming

Club Champion for 2009. A morning warm up consisting of a mixture of hand mowing, raking bunkers and changing holes obviously did no harm!

Our final individual golf day was held on July 23 at Boston West. This was the last chance to win the Order of Merit and grab a place at the National Championship later on in the year.

The winner on the day was Dan "Skippy" Milgate on his first outing with the Section, hopefully your first of many. Second place was Head Greenkeeper, Richard Owens, who kept up this year's tradition of a home greenkeeper in the prizes at every event; and third place was Chris Wilkinson. The trade Winner was Carl Chamberlain.

Many thanks to all at Boston West, for the excellently presented course and the meal and hospitality afterwards.

This year's Order of Merit winner is Rob Bemment, from Immingham Golf Club, to go alongside his recent victory in his Club Championship.

Trade Order of Merit was once again Gary Cooper.

Qualifiers for the National Championship are as follows,
0-9 Rob Bemment
10-18 John Hewson
19-28 Tim Harris

Should anyone not be able to make it to this event then the next person in the standings will be eligible.

The next golf event is our match vs the Secretaries on September 23 at Boston Golf Club. The Secretary will be contacting people as to their availability for this fixture.

Many thanks.

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club.

steveimmingham@aol.com
www.eastofenglandbigga.com



East Midlands

Firstly apologies for no report in last month's magazine - a slight confusion on my part regarding deadlines for getting articles in!!

Anyway, the Spring Tournament was held on 22 April at Kirby Muxloe GC in glorious sunshine. The day was jointly

sponsored by Aitkens Sportsturf, Mansfield Sand and Specialist Groundcare Machinery, with Tacit sponsoring the Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin. Section 1 was won by Lee Wenlock, with Paul Frith and Nigel Colley in second and third places respectively. Section 2 was won by Chris Weir with Antony Bindley and Andrew de Wet in second and third. Our thanks go to Kirby Muxloe and especially Antony Bindley and his team for a great day.

The Summer Tournament and BBQ were held on July 2 at Greetham Valley with Banks Amenity, Countrywide and Vitax sponsoring the prizes table and Tacit the longest drive and nearest the pin once again. Section 1 was won by Russell Allen carding a fantastic nett 66 with Adi Porter and Nigel Colley in second and third. Section 2 saw Rob Welsh win with Dan Branson and Andy de Wet in second and third. Neil Harris - Club Captain at Greetham won the trade and associate prize with Simon (I've only played twice this year) Banks coming second - somehow managing to not get his handicap cut again! Once again, as always a great day was had - thanks go to Adi Porter and his guys for presenting us with a fantastic course.

The Headland Pairs competition is hotting up - neither group has any pair racing away with it and competition is tight to decide the semi final places.

The Section is in the process of organising an Autumn education day for November 19 at Forest Hill GC - speakers to be announced very shortly - this promises to be an excellent day and hopefully the first of many.

Our AGM tournament is to be held at Matlock GC on Thursday, October 15, starting at 10.30am with the AGM and meal to follow. Expect the letters to fall on your doormats soon.

As always if anybody has any interesting news or gossip please let me know at biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com.

Andy de Wet



Mid Anglia

Hello all, I write this article

after returning from Knebworth GC following our Summer competition. A great day was had by everyone and the course was superbly set up for us, so a massive thankyou to Andrew Kennett and his staff for an enjoyable day.

The results from the day were as follows:- 1. Neil (Poncho Gonzalez, Gringo) Whittaker 43pts; 2. Ed O'Hanlon, 39pts; 3. Trevor Booth 38pts on countback; 4. Frank Whittle, 38pts. Longest Drive. Simon Woolley. Nearest the Pin. Nigel Phelan. The Trade prize was won by S. Bush from Ernest Doe with 40pts.

Our thanks again for the sponsorship of the day goes to Tim Webb and Tacit for providing a fantastic prize table, and also to the loyal trade members who show up time after time. Thanks guys.

Our next event will be on October 7 at Mid-Herts GC. The start time is not yet known. The golf will be followed by the AGM, so if there are any concerns you might have about how our Section is run, then this would be an ideal time for you get up and have your say.

Anyway guys, that's all for this month, as we always say, if you have any news or views that you wish to be heard, get in touch with one of the committee and we will get it aired through this article.

Enjoy the rest of the Summer and we look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Steve Mason



Midland

Well here we are again, third summer on the trot that has been for the most part wet and this year also windy like I cannot recall. Well, at least we have saved on water costs and have been able to seed/overseed during the summer! Which will have helped this month's calendar page sponsor Matt Gresty/MM Professional Amenity Grass Seed. For your seed needs you can contact Matt On: matthew.gresty@limagrains.co.uk.

I am always thanking our sponsors within these lines and quite rightly so, and our thanks to all of them for their kind and

continued support. However, it is now your opportunity to act as a sponsor to one of our members for a condition that will at sometime in our lives affect one in three of us - cancer. Adam Jones, Assistant Coarse (have you met A.J. after losing at poker) Manager at Penn GC is taking part in the BUPA Great North Run 2009 on September 20 to raise money for Bowel Cancer UK. He would really appreciate your support. For a former overweight smoker (his words not mine) it is a challenging prospect for him, although he is training hard and plans to complete the course in around two hours. It is easy to donate online with a credit or debit card, just go to his Just Giving page: <http://www.justgiving.com/adam-jones76> Just Giving sends your donations straight to Bowel Cancer UK and automatically reclaims Gift Aid if you're a UK tax payer, so your donation is worth even more to them. I hope you'll join him in supporting this important charity. Good luck, Adam.

Our Autumn Tournament is to be held at the lovely venue of Burton GC on October 16 at 12 noon at a cost of £20. What great value. I know it's nice as some years ago I was invited for interview for the CM's position. Following interview, after some time, I was wondering how I had got on. Then, on New Year's Eve, out of the blue I received a phone call at work (Penn Greenkeeper's Office) from Gavin Robson asking me whether I had applied for any jobs, I said "Burton, but have not heard anything yet" Gavin then informed me that I had not go it as he had! I congratulated him and wished him a Happy New Year. That is the only time I have ever spoken with him on the phone! One has to laugh, I'm sure the course will be great Gav. Don't forget that our AGM is to be held on the day at 6pm. If you wish to attend the AGM and are not playing golf and would like to join the evening meal party please contact our Treasurer Gary so as you don't starve. However, if you just wish to attend the AGM all are welcome.

The section's committee is proud to announce that our regional representative is now also on the Board of management up there at HQ, so a double reason for attending our AGM and putting forward your thoughts and considerations

about how the BIGGA organisation is run and how it could be improved. Well done our Treasurer, Gary Cunningham.

Well, I must now leave it there as I'm getting ready for a fly-fishing trip with my father and brother in Wales, then onto mother's for more of the same in Cumbria but with the added bonus of Yorkshire home cooking. Hard life ay.

Let us pray for at least an Indian summer to follow.

Sean McDade.

South West and South Wales



South Wales

Hope you are all well.

As I write this, it is absolutely tipping down outside, so I hope that by the time this magazine is printed, the weather will have improved and we may get some of that BBQ summer that we were promised!

The weather did hold off, however, for the summer golf competition which was held at Newport Golf Club. A good turn out of members played on a golf course that was in absolutely superb condition. So well done to Head Greenkeeper, Paul Handy, and his staff for all their efforts. The results were as follows: 1. Paul Handy, Newport GC, 40pts; 2. Huw Morgan, Ashburnham GC, 38pts; 3. Stuart Ross, Brecon GC, 37pts. Longest Drive: Mark (Shalke Burger is innocent) Wilshire. Nearest the Pin: Peter Lacey, of Tower Europe. Peter then went on to three putt! The trade prize was won by Peter Holstom, Countrywide.

Thanks to Steve Milton, of Tacit, for sponsoring the day and for presenting the prizes. Also a big thank you to Newport GC for hosting the event; to Russell Thomas, Secretary; Andrew Gould, Captain, and to the Steward and Stewardess Phil and Diane for the splendid meal.

Still at Newport GC. Congratulations to Rhys Norville of reaching the final of The Toro Student Greenkeeper Of The Year competition. Well done Rhys!

The recent BIGGA/Scotts Golf Management Trophy com-

petition was held at Llanwern GC. The course was in superb condition thanks to the efforts of Gareth and his shy and retiring staff. The day went well thanks to the organisation of your Regional Coordinator, Jane Jones. Thanks Jane! The results of the competition were as follows:

1. Llanwern GC 1st team; 2. Morriston GC; 3. Llanishen GC

Thanks again to Jane, also to Simon Keeble, of Scotts UK Professional, for the prizes; to Gareth and his staff including Rhys 'Clean Fingernails' McDonagh and to Llanwern GC for agreeing to host the event (and for agreeing to put the cricket on the TV while we waited for the players to come in! Next year the event will be held at The Rhondda Golf Club as it's only a few miles from my house! Sorry, Gary!

On the education front, Syngenta will be holding a seminar at Ashburnham GC on Wednesday, October 7, starting at 9.30am. The main topic for discussion will be Rescue, a new product for the control of Ryegrass in fine turf. Also attending will be Scotts and the STRI. I will be emailing invites soon, so if you would like to attend but haven't had an invite then give me a call. Should be an interesting day.

Finally, I would like to send a 'good luck' message on behalf of the Section to Kerry 'Joko' Jones who has left his position as Course Manager at Garrant Park GC to work for 'The Countryside Initiative' (I think) in his native Carmarthenshire. Kerry put a lot of hard work into the Section and has been both Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the South Wales Section. All the best in your new career, Kerry, though I'm sure we haven't seen the last of you!

Ceri Richards
07831 168645



South West

Turn my back for two minutes and it all goes pear-shaped. I left Stroud on July 4 in baking sunshine for my two weeks in Italy - and since returning it hasn't stopped raining. Bunkers back to

square one – trackways around the course near impassable – pitchmarks by the truck-load. Now we've got some fusarium on a couple of greens, even noticed some Anthracnose on the putting green this morning.

If it's any consolation however, Northern Italy is having its worst summer in 40 years, with some lake or other that was drained into a canal in the early 70s now having water again for the first time. There were thunderstorms, hail, winds, – even leaves in the pool one day – we suffered that badly! Hope the weather isn't causing you guys too much trouble, but chins up, it'll soon be Winter! – again.

I also represented the Association at Ascot racecourse when TurfTrax launched a new stand-alone weather-station and “going stick”. The weather station is either fixed, or portable (for situations such as soccer pitches where it may be necessary to know the difference between the centre of the pitch and the shadow of the stands). It has a solar panel to be self-powering, and a built in SIM card so all data can be downloaded to a mobile with just a single phone call from anywhere.

The “Going Stick” was also interesting – this is a GPS linked unit used on racecourses to “map” and record the going by measuring the firmness of the ground, and the breakback capacity of the turf all around the racecourse, so that a trainer may be able to work out a line around the course that suits his horse.

TurfTrax also undertake x-ray mapping of all types of sports-turf to determine soil types and underlying layers which may be contributing to poor drainage, compaction, or just poor ground. All very interesting and not much left to chance in sport these days.

A far cry from the day when King George VI was allegedly being shown around the parade ring prior to a race, and noticed a trainer surreptitiously slipping something into his horses' mouth. “What's that my man?” cried the monarch, suitably concerned. “Why nothing sir – a harmless treat,” replied the trainer shiftily, before breaking off a piece, offering it to his Highness, and eating some himself to make his point.

Later he was heard to remark to the jockey – “Get on that horse, lad, and ride, and don't

worry if anything goes past you – it'll either be me or the Prince of Wales”.

With the National Championship fast approaching, all eyes will be turning yet again to Burnham & Berrow. Richard is quite aware of the task in hand – rough well mown back, greens at 14 feet, clubhouse bar well stocked. Should be a great couple of days and I hope the South West will be well represented.

Back at Minch, we were recently judged by Richard Studdard, from the STRI, for the Environment Competition. I do admit to being a little disappointed when it was announced that BIGGA were handing the competition over to the STRI, but I have to say that Lee Penrose, Richard, and the team have made a splendid job of re-launching and re-branding this important initiative. As for our inspection – Matt (my son), Richard and I had just got out onto the course when the heavens opened.

As the three of us had to go round in one of the “environmentally friendly” electric Twisters (rather than the very unfriendly diesel cabstar that we'd left hidden out the back) only two could fit in the cab – Matt refused to come out and I could see Richard's pen hovering over the scoring column, so Muggins here was left out in the best part of an inch of rain. ‘Spect he marked us down for that, even though I got half-drowned!

At BIGGA, things are focusing very much on Harrogate Week 2010. Paul Woodham and I are organising a “2mm all summer debate” which promises to be one of the must-see attractions.

There will be some articles about the debate appearing very shortly in the magazine. We have some of the top men in the country today lined up – from Open Championship courses, top resort courses, high end members courses, and even the Gingerbreads to ensure fair play.

Do keep a sharp eye out for this session, because places will be limited and this promises to be the mother of all debates on the different management strategies practiced in the UK today, how to overcome any problems, and what your members really really want. Stand space for the exhibition has sold well, and with a full education programme

Harrogate Week 2010 promises to be one of the best ever. The Region will again be sponsoring places, and the South West Section will also sponsor a place for the best letter describing the reasons for visiting. Do start to build this week into your plans for the winter – the Association needs you to attend, and keep – well – keep the show on the road.

Any news from your area gratefully received.

Paul Worster.

paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



South Coast

First sorry for no report last month I missed the deadline.

I have two golf meetings to report. South Coast v The Secretaries which I am happy to report was won by our boys. A big thank you goes to Course-Care the annual sponsor and to the golf club, Barton, for allowing us to hold this event.

The summer tournament, sponsored by Tacit, was won by Tony Gadd. He reported to me that the course was in very good condition and of course the greens were magic. So well done the greenkeepers.

The next tournament is the autumn one being held on the Isle of Wight. So Kevin needs to be contacted ASAP remembering that our Section is the sponsor and you will only need to get yourself. The tournament is being held at Sandown & Shanklin Golf Club. Ferries from Southampton – Cowes and Lymington-Yarmouth.

Best value from Southampton. If you share a car it will cost approximate £11 sharing with five others, or £23 one way. Best to Google for the best price you can get.

I know I have asked before but I really need all of you help to put all the information you need so its up to you all especially organisers of event to relay results etc to me.

You can contact me on 07773138409 or via email: chrissturgess@yahoo.co.uk

So sorry that's all for now. Short but sweet.

Chris Sturgess

South East Region



Kent

Afraid the only news for you this month is the up-coming golf do on September 24 at Redlibbits hosted, ably I'm sure, by our Chairman, Kev Morris. I did play the course with him, incidentally, a couple of weeks ago and, despite a few trees getting in the way of some excellent shots by me, the course was looking great and will be perfect for our arrival in a couple of weeks. Please let me or Kev know as soon as possible whether you are attending in order for us to prepare accordingly.

As I say not much news this month so I'll just finish up by thanking our many regulars who turn up to our events making our little ensemble resemble something of an institution. Unfortunately, Broadmoor is also an institution and I'm starting to see some similarities!

Many thanks to our sponsors too, for their continued support. We couldn't do this without you.

Best of British

Rob Holland

07843 410755



Surrey

Friday August 7. For those who are worried about having forgotten my birthday on August 2, please don't for it is more than likely that by the time I see you next, I will have forgotten that you had forgotten.

Thursday August 6. My Tacit team comprising of Anthony Freeman, Mark Harvey and myself, played golf with Sussex Section at East Brighton GC and I must say that we had a marvellous day. Other Surrey Section invaders included a Gary Ogilvie team, Matthew Lawrence and Iain Morrison and a team from Tandridge GC, Iain Dye, Gary Bishop and David Pedleham. Two of the teams played well and won prizes and the third team, it would be ungentlemanly and

self-deprecating to name them, did not.

The semi-finalists in the Surrey Bowl are Gareth Roberts and Paul Bacon v Ron Christie and Roger Tydeman and Gary Ogilvie and Neil Gilham v David Worsfold and Jamie McEnroy.

I had thought that this last paragraph ought to contain a list of my birthday presents and friends and family who sent cards, but so much excitement in one edition could be too much for our more senior members to take, so I'll just say goodbye until next month.

Brian Willmott



Essex

It's 10 years since we last played at Burnham-on-Crouch Golf Club and what a difference it was. Last time we experienced every weather condition that could be thrown at us and this time the Gods were kind. The sun shone and the winds stayed moderate, which was lucky as Burnham is on the banks of the River Crouch with open plains to the west and south so when it blows, it BLOWS.

The Course was in fantastic condition, the 36 plus starters enjoyed a great day's golf. No hold-ups and around in just over the four hours. Praise must go to Course Manager, Robert Coughlan, and his team for the condition, consistent pace on the greens and a well-manicured course, trouble if you were wild and forgiving if you weren't.

Scores were interesting but the best didn't disgrace themselves.

Overall winner of the Summer Trophy. Plus entrance to the BIGGA National Championship was Sam Cook, Colchester Golf Club; he joins Adam Millward and Mark Stopps on the Essex Team with one more to join them from the "Essex Trophy" this month.

Div 1. 1. Antony Kirwan, Lexden Wood GC, 37 pts. 2. Tom Smith, Colne Valley GC, 33 pts. Div 2. 1. Martin Forrester, The Essex G&CC, 41 pts; 2. Ian Wood, Romford GC 32, pts. Guest Prize, Paul Holloway, 39 pts. Trade Prize, Andy Turbin, 39 pts. Nearest the Pin. Simon

Cairns. Longest Drive: Antony Kirwan.

Thanks must go to the members of Burnham-on-Crouch Golf Club for allowing us to play their course, to the catering staff for feeding us so well and to Andy Turbin (committee member at Burnham and trade sponsor of our section) for presenting the prizes. I would like to thank all those trade members who supplied the prizes for the raffle table and to all those members that joined us on the day, helping to make it one of the best events we've had for a long time.

The Essex Captains v Greenkeepers match at Romford Golf Club, July 7 was badly affected by rain and thunder, most managed nine holes but that was about it. Ian Wood, Course Manager at Romford, reports that the weather conditions only allowed a certain amount of play over the day. The results are as follows:-

Holes 1-9 Captains: Alan Levet & Phil Wilson, Bentley Golf Club, 25 pts. Holes 1-9 Greenkeepers: Andy Cracknell & Michael Bartlett, Orsett Golf Club, 21 pts. Holes 10-18 Captains: James Robinson & Sam Smith, Gosfield Lake GC, 24 pts. Holes 10-18 Greenkeepers: Richard Dunmow & Malcolm Smith, Channels GC, 20 pts. Nearest the Pin: 6th Hole, Richard Hare, GK, Abridge Golf Club. Nearest the Pin: 17th Hole, John Wheelhouse, Captain, Channels Golf Club.

John Smith, Essex Captain's Captain welcomed all the players and presented the prizes, he thanked the club and staff for their hard work and which regrettably was slightly spoilt by the weather. The Captains won 13-7 on the day.

I will not be able to give an account of the "Essex Trophy" which is to be held at Canons Brook Golf Club, Wednesday, August 19 until September's edition of this magazine. If you have not yet entered there is still just time to get in, I hope to see you there. As I stated last month we have re-named this event.

That's all for this time. Holidays and work are keeping us all busy and not much news is coming my way.

If you do have any news for the website or for GK International please contact me on 07764-862.337 or via e-mail essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

It's hard to believe that we are into September already and planning for Harrogate Week is starting to dominate time in the office. The education programme goes to print this month and will be available both in hard copy and on-line in a couple of weeks time.

Keep an eye on www.harrogateweek.org.uk for full details or follow the link at the top of the BIGGA web site Home Page. While bookings from exhibitors are reasonably good for this time of the year there is no doubt that the downturn in the economy has taken its toll. It is noticeable that there are a number of regular exhibitors that have not rebooked due to cash flow problems and that have opted to wait and see how things go this summer before committing. This is, of course, of concern, however, traditionally we have always had a flurry of bookings after SALTEX and through into December. The sales team is working hard to try to ensure that this happens again this year as well as exploring new avenues.

There is no doubt that exhibitions generally are under threat and I have heard of several around the country that have been cancelled this year, I'm sure that members will be aware of some of these.

Harrogate Week is not only a vital source of revenue for the Association but also the best opportunity, arguably in Europe, for members and their peers to meet suppliers, access bespoke education and to network within the sports turf industry. More and more companies are having their budgets either cut or frozen and so are therefore looking closely at how they spend their money. There are a number of publications within the industry, all competing, and some often almost giving advertising away to fill pages. BIGGA's advertising revenue in Greenkeeper International and on the web has suffered in no small way and as I have reported previously we have reduced staffing levels at Headquarters by three as a direct consequence. All I ask is that you support your association that is there to support you.

With that in mind we are rapidly approaching the time of year when Sections hold their AGM's and often elect new committee members. I know that it is very difficult to balance work, home and outside interests but please try to give some of your time to your Section, even if it is not on a regular basis. A small amount of help will ease the burden that all too often in some Sections rests with one or two people. The age-old adage of 'a job shared is a job halved' has never been more appropriate. Headquarters staff are on hand to back up the Sections and this can be called upon direct or through the Regional Administrators.

I believe that BIGGA has achieved a great deal since 1987 and has a lot to look forward to, but its ongoing success rests in the hands of its members, who are its best ambassadors and its best recruitment officers. Please do your best to keep BIGGA at the forefront of the sports turf industry.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive