

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

Not a lot to report on this month but the Section has held a couple of interesting evening seminars at Elmwood recently with Andy Russell, from Headland Amenities, and Kenny Liddle, from Bayer Crop Sciences, talking generally about fertilisers and pesticides.

Attendances were reasonable although it is surprising that there were so few younger members and students along. It is a great opportunity for them to learn practical points about many of the products on the market from incredibly experienced people as well as the opportunity to network with many Course Managers from the area. Both are things that will help them as they move forward in their career.

When I was a student, I certainly learned as much attending events such as these and even golf outings and by asking questions of the course managers of the time than I ever did at college.

On April 27, Stan Zontek, and friends from Penn State, will be talking at Elmwood on winter damage while the spring outing will probably just have been played as you read this. Winners and losers in the next report and on www.biggacentralsection.org.uk.

Back in the area after a couple of years away is Andy Campbell, formerly of the Duke's Course, who has begun working with Ransomes Jacobsen and is planning to base himself in the St Andrews area. Welcome back Andy and I'm sure we see you at a number of our events in the future,

Gordon Moir



East

Well we thought the last of the snow was gone.....But back it came! Just when we were getting our winter work programmes on the course finished.

Looking for our first flowers of spring I think everything is at least one month behind in Scotland and probably the rest of the UK. Roll on the summer!

Back in February we organised a site visit to Barenbrug seeds Factory and Falkirk FC.

Our thanks go out to David and Billy for the very informative talk on their seed cultivars at the Barenbrug factory; Jim Dawson, Head Groundsman at Falkirk FC. for showing us round, and last but not least, Tom Brannan, of Greentech, for sponsoring the very enjoyable day.

The Scottish Conference held at Carnegie Conference centre Dunfermline on March 2, was excellent, all credit to Peter Boyd, BIGGA Regional Administrator, for bringing together some of the best speakers we have linked to our profession.

Our spring Outing is almost upon us. It is time to blow the cobwebs off the golf clubs and possibly the golf swings too. Kilspong is the venue, a very popular golf course down the east coast and we anticipate a big turn out for this one. Good luck to everyone who plays and enjoy the day with fellow greenkeepers. Let's hope the sun shines for us.

The East Section wishes Chris Yeaman every success in his new job as Head Greenkeeper at the Royal Burgess Golfing Society Edinburgh.

Have you registered yet?

CPD points are being made more available in our Section with educational site visits that

we are organising in our Section. BIGGA is now recognising these for credit points so why not go to the BIGGA website to find out how to claim other credits from work related studies that are on going in our profession. Download forms and register. It's free to BIGGA members.

The US. Masters Syndrome is upon us golfers brainwashed by the Evergreen Masters at Augusta now in glorious HD on 50" flat screen TVs.

The Question will come on the Monday morning of April 12 at local golf course - the same as we hear every year. How come we can't have our courses looking like that?

The Answer? Climate, money, staff... Do we need to say more?

Until Next Month

Tom Murray



Ayrshire

Hi, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Dennis Tweddell good luck in his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at GC Schallenburg, in Germany, All the best 'D'. Unfortunately Dennis now leaves behind an Ayrshire Section without a leader! We all have Dennis to thank for all the hard work he put into our Section over the years ie the footy matches against the West Section and especially the home and away ties against the Irish GreenKeepers. Going to be a great autumn outing to Germany I'd say!

A record number of bodies turned out for the Scottish BIGGA Conference, in Dunfermline, on Tuesday, March 2. Many topics were covered, including the 2mm debate! A few eyebrows were raised at that one, I can tell you! It would

be interesting to hear anyone's comments on this issue. It was a very informative day for everyone involved and, a very entertaining presentation from STRI among others.

A big thank you must go to Peter Boyd for yet another successful conference. Thanks Peter!

Finally the Ayrshire spring outing has been arranged for Tuesday, April 27 at Largs Kelburn GC.

I look forward to seeing you all there.

Any news or gossip don't hesitate to contact me.... John Mair on 07500874449 or email me johnmair982@btinternet.com.

John Mair



North

As I write this month's report the weather seems to have taken a turn for the better. At least on the coast it has anyway. Some courses inland still have quite a bit of snow lying about. You can travel 10 - 15 miles out of Aberdeen and you'll still find eight inches of snow, and that's at the beginning of March. Not long now until the season gets under way. We start our season, as do most clubs, with a Captains/Vice Captains' match and this takes place on March 27. Is it me or is the season starting earlier. With this weather we've had they'll still expect the place to be in tip top condition.

I recently spoke to the Scottish Chairman, John Geddes about the Scottish Conference down in Dunfermline. He was saying that there was a record amount attending this year and that Peter has got to find somewhere a little bigger if this year's attendance is anything to go by. John said that the speak-

ers kept everyone entertained although he did say he spotted a couple of nodding dogs in the afternoon session. Thanks go to Peter Boyd for yet another successful day and it just goes to show how popular it is. Thanks also go to the lads that travelled down from the North Section to show your support. You know who you are. Thank you.

The 200 Club is upon us again and that man Robert Hardie has been working his socks off to make sure it all runs smoothly. He has told me that the cards for this year have already been sent out so you should have received them by now. If you need any more cards for friends and family or you simply don't want to be part of the 200 Club then please get in touch with Robert on 07590 775957 and he will be only too happy to help. The cards are once again sponsored by Gary Smith and Scotts. Thank you so much for your continued support of the North Section.

The committee has asked me to point out that when you as a member of BIGGA, and use your card to get complimentary golf, you must telephone the golf club in advance to let them know that you will be turning up to play. Also please make sure that your membership card is up to date as more and more golf clubs are asking to see the membership card and photograph. Believe it or not some members are passing their own cards to their 'mates' to use on different courses. Anyone found doing this will be asked by the committee why this is so. It also spoils it for the other members.

I finish this month on a sad note for the lads at Peterculter GC. They are losing one of the finest apprentices who has ever graced the greens there. Who you ask? Warren Beveridge has decided enough is enough and headed back to where he lives. He has taken up a position at Inch Marlo Golf Centre in Deeside. The lads at Peterculter are absolutely gutted, Warren. As in the words of the Deputy, Mark Angus, he's a great lad and he'll be really missed. I just hope that you continue to come to the outings and that you have learnt to tie your tie! Good Luck Warren.

That's all for this month, any news give us a shout on 07813889374.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links



West

Well let's hope by the time of press the weather has changed slightly as I think everybody has experienced enough of the cold, frosty conditions, and would like some sunshine and warmth, even a small amount of rain.

Panic will now ensue to catch up with all the course preparation jobs and aeration work, then the top-dressing and scarifying, how can we possibly fit it all in, I wonder?

After promising to submit an article each month low and behold the February issue was minus my article which I think can only be put down to a mislaid e-mail, never mind I do intend to try each month to put something in for the benefit of the members and would therefore request some help. Could members please contact me with some information on births, marriages, sponsored events, or even a point they want to get off their chest, all my contact details will be listed at the end.

Matters to be mentioned are the Scottish conference which I thought was very interesting although I was expecting some more discussion and controversy with regards to Greg Evans, but only a couple of people asked some questions so I assume everybody pretty much agrees with his principle argument. STRI followed and certainly put a different and entertaining slant on their presentation but the main points were put over comprehensively.

The afternoon timetable of Course Designer/Architect, Paul Kimble, was extremely interesting as it makes you realise what types of considerations have to be accommodated when looking at different sites and how often they alter the original formulation.

The last speaker of the day normally has folk falling asleep or nodding off at least but Lee Strutt seemed to hold their attention, probably because of the unusual subject matter of transplanting heather. I found his talk exciting and informative and was pleasantly surprised at the cost when considering how much work and time went into the operation.

Well done to all the speakers

and to Peter Boyd for his efforts, Stuart Greenwood filled in for Iain Macleod, as he was unwell, as Chairman of the morning session, and the Scottish Chairman, John Geddes, looked after the afternoon session. Well done to both. Let's hope next year's conference is as good.

A visit to Barenburg Seeds was arranged at the last minute on March 9 and some nine people attended all of which I gathered found the experience to be very informative. They were shown round the warehouse and facilities and then later given a tour of the Falkirk football pitches.

Barenburg has offered this in future should members be interested and the Section will probably look to organise something later in the year.

Dates to note

The spring outing at Lanark golf club on April 29, the summer outing at Murcar Golf Club on June 17, and the autumn outing at Helensburgh Golf Club on September 2.

As stated previously should members wish to have a specific item they want mentioned then please contact me on st.greenkeeper@ukonline.co.uk, or 07790823914, or my land line is 0141-942-5554.

Here's to a good season.

Stuart Taylor

Northern Region



North Wales

With Easter comes the season proper and instead of fighting the elements to get on with our work, we now find ourselves fighting an ever increasing tee time list to get on instead! We don't get bitter about it though do we? Well not much anyway.

The spring tournament takes place at Caernarfon Golf Club on April 28 tee times between 10am and 12.30, this competition is an individual and entry forms are to be returned to Jez Hughes by April 21 please.

There is a two day grounds maintenance trade exhibition taking place at Conwy (Caernarvonshire) Golf Club on April 21 and 22, entry is free but by ticket only, tickets available from Conwy Golf Club, or from any of the company reps showing at the exhibition.

In local news John Edwards, Head Greenkeeper of Padeswood and Buckley Golf Club broke his ankle in the recent bad winter, I think I speak for us all when I wish him a speedy recovery.

Carl Parry, of Mold Golf Club, has taken on the position vacated by ex-Around the greens columnist Dave Goodrich, at Denbigh Golf Club. By all accounts he's a character who will thrive in his new surroundings and his input will soon show through on the course. That's about it for now so.

All the best until next month!
Pete Maybury 07756001187
or e-mail petemayb66@aol.com



North West

Well, as I write this it's March and I'm sure I saw some grass growing yesterday, Winter is well and truly behind us and hopefully everyone in the North West has the weather they want and surely deserve after the Winter we have endured.

Plans are afoot for some great golf outings this year and the possibility of a joint venture with the gcma on an educational theme, but more on this at a later date.

Our first golf outing will take place at Fairhaven Golf Club, on Monday, April 26, it's a course I have never visited, but have heard only good reports of. Please come along if you can, sometimes it's good to visit other courses and chat with your peers.

Once again please send info on anything you deem to be of interest to your fellow sports turf managers and we will add it to these notes.

I'm going out to smell the sweet smell of cut grass. Oh how I've missed that smell, happy cutting for April,

Cheers
Peter McVicar
pdmv@htmail.co.uk
07885347818



Northern

Hello, hope you are all well. I am finally pleased to say, sitting writing this in the long awaited

Around The Green

sunshine. Let's hope this is the start of a glorious spring.

A few golf dates for your diary, April 20, The Sandmoor Golf Club (Leeds) 1st tee at 10.30. Wed, June 30, Scarborough North Cliff Golf Club first Tee at 10am (Accommodation can be arranged for those wanting to make a few days of it.)

Wed, July 14, Wooley Park Golf Club (Sheffield Match) 1st tee at 1pm; Wed, August 25; Invitation day at Harrogate Golf Club 1st tee at 9.30. The cost of all events is £20 payable at least one week prior to the event. Sorry there is no news or gossip this month if you have anything you would like to share please pass it on to me thanks, Frank Stewart, 72 West Park View, Roundhay, Leeds, LS8 2DY. Phone: 07947 401278.

Frank Stewart



Sheffield

Our Spring lecture was held at Rotherham GC on March 11. The speaker on the day was Eddie Seaward from The All England Lawn Tennis Club. I'm sure those who attended will agree that Eddie gave a fantastic talk that was interesting and informative. I'm sure not all of us would like those pressures though.

Unfortunately though we once again had a very disappointing turnout. In the Sheffield Section we have around 160 members and I think there were around 10 greenkeepers at the last event. I fully understand we are in difficult times, golf clubs are restricting members attending, members are very busy at work and it doesn't interest some people.

I feel that it is vital that we maintain a strong a Section as possible if not for ourselves for the next generation of greenkeepers. Not all events we organise appeal to everyone, but they do provide the opportunity to network and find out other people's problems and their success stories.

I must once again thank the representatives in our area for providing us with fantastic raffle prizes once again and for their attendance at these events.

You will all be receiving invitations for our first golf match soon. Hopefully we will see many of you there.

That is all from me for now, if anyone wants to contact me for any reason please feel free.

Speak to you all in May.

J. Stevens

jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com
07738719614



North East

Well what can we write about this month, unfortunately there is not a lot going on. No doubt everyone is fed up with the snow this winter. Funny isn't it, when we want snow to close the course for a rest it's not too long when we are moaning to have it re-opened because we are sick of it. Ah well, it's nearly spring.

Both golf competitions are sorted this year two new venues which are long overdue. Firstly we are at the City of Newcastle on April 21, tee off time is a little later this year between 1-30pm --2 30pm, hoping this will tempt more people to play as they need not have to take a full day off.

Secondly, the Autumn comp is to be played at Gosforth GC [Bridle Path] on October 6, tee off time at 12noon till 1pm. This is the first time we have played there for a very, very, long time, so let's hope this year we can attract more people as its pretty much easy to get to both courses.

Michael McKenna, of Hexham GC, is leaving his job there and moving to new pastures at the end of March to work at the prestigious Loch Lomond course. I'm sure we all wish him well in his new job.

Well that's it for another month. News is getting a bit thin these days. Someone out there must have some news to write about it can be anything of course.

Jimmy Richardson

Midland Region



East Midlands

Hello everyone, hope you are well and enjoying the brighter days that we have been having. The start of the spring is upon us, and we can hopefully look forward to some warmer weather.

The spring tournament this year is at Erewash Valley GC and I hope that you have all sent your entry forms off and brushed the 1st tee nerves under the carpet! If you haven't sent in your form by the time you read this then you still have a couple of days before the closing date so please e-mail or ring Andy to let him know you are interested. If you are coming to a Section event for the first time then you can expect a warm welcome from everyone and a great day out. Erewash Valley's Course Manager, Graham Arnold, who has been a very active member of BIGGA for many years from its early days is due to retire during 2010, so please all come along to pass on our thanks and appreciation to Graham - especially some of the 'older' faces within the Section, who haven't been seen for a few years - we know you're still out there!

The Spring event this year is going to be part of the qualifiers for the National Championships this year along with the summer competition, both events are Stableford scored and aggregate scores will worked out to decide who we send. So if you want a chance to play the famous Red and Blue courses at The Berkshire during early October, and have the entry fee paid for you, please remember to get your entries in for both events.

By the time that you read this all of you that entered should have received the information regarding the Headland Pairs' competition. With some different pairings for this year and quite a few new teams it promises to be a hard fought competition with the venue for the final being the New Course at Sunningdale in September. Fantastic. But remember - you've got to be in it to win it!

The Section committee is

working very hard to come up with some great education days which we hope you will all enjoy and more importantly, get some benefit from. Once again, if anyone has any suggestions for what they would in the way of education or social events or even just some news from within the section then please contact Andy de Wet at biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com.

Matt Wormald



Mid Anglia

Not much news this month folks but please note that the Spring tournament has been re-scheduled for Tuesday, May 18 and will now be played at Bedford and County Golf Club, Green Lane, Clapham. Thanks very much to Geoff Fenn for arranging the venue for us at such short notice and good luck with the London Marathon, rather you than me. Berkhamsted, Stocks and Ashridge will be hosting the Section later in the year. And don't forget that the Spring tournament is also the Regional Qualifier for the National Championship and also the results will go towards Golfer of the Year. Please come along and support the Section, especially if you haven't been for a while. We always get a warm welcome at Beds and County and it is a very nice golf course. Get your entries in to Richard Saunders as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Rich can be contacted on 07795 328663.

Craig Spooner

craig.spooner@limagrain.co.uk



Midland

The Spring Tournament this year is at Trentham Golf Club, on Monday May 17 with a 12 noon start. Cost of £23 to include soup and sandwiches before golf, a three course meal after golf, with Nearest the Pin on all par 3's, and a main prize table worth £250 courtesy of Farmura. To give more a better

chance of a prize there is to be a slight change this year in the way such are distributed: There will be an overall 1st, 2nd and 3rd, plus the next best in handicapped categories 1, 2 and 3 (I hope that makes sense). Please see our website at www.biggamidlandsection.com <<http://www.biggamidlandsection.com/>> for an entry form, or ring Rhys Thomas on 07775 581 615 or Gary Cunningham on 07780 953 764 to enter. It would be lovely to see some new faces this year, why not come and see if you enjoy it? You will be made very welcome.

This month's calendar page sponsor is our old friend Osprey. To add a shot of sense to your water management and distribution needs please see their website: www.ospreywmg.com <<http://www.ospreywmg.com/>>. Our thanks to Osprey.

Many congratulations to Paul Woodham, who has left Gay Hill G.C to start a new career with the STRI. Paul started with the STRI on March 1 and we wish him all the best on behalf of the committee and members of the Midland Section.

My thanks to our Chair, Ed, for the above. If, however, you would like a little more to our notes then please email me on sean.mcdade@homecall.co.uk with any news. I look forward to your many emails (yes, it is the first!).

And yes the trout season's open, and what a shame that Grayling take the same flies.

Sean McDade



East of England

Finally, two weeks without rain, no sign of any snow, temperatures above 5 degrees (just!) and, dare I say it, a sight of the sun. Maybe things are finally looking up after the long trek of a winter we have had.

Our Section had its Spring seminar on March 10, at Newark Golf Club. The day included presentations from Graham Williams, John Deere Irrigation; Gwyn Preece, John Deere Sprayers; Peter Wisbey, talking about working in Portugal and Spain (appealing after this winter!); Alan Martin,

Mansfield Sands, about the process of getting topdressing and topsoil from the quarry to the golf course; and a course walk from Course Manager, Graeme Macdonald, showing some of his re-construction work and heather generation projects. Many thanks to all speakers for an interesting and informative day, and to Newark Golf Club for their hospitality, especially the "Cow Pie".

Our golf fixtures for the season have been finalised, with one change of venue to last month's post. The fixtures are;

Newark Golf Club

Thursday May 27, tee off 1pm; Tydd St Giles Golf Club, Thursday, July 15, tee off 1pm; Lincoln Golf Club, Wednesday, September 22, tee off 1pm; Match vs Trade, Louth Golf Club, Thursday October 14, tee off 11am; AGM, Sleaford Golf Club, Thursday, December 16, tee off 11am; Christmas Bring and Win

All members are invited to the golf days and we look forward to seeing some new faces this year.

Many thanks.

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club.

steveimmingham@aol.com

South East Region



Surrey

Sunday March 7. I hope you all enjoyed Ron Christie's 2010 newsletter and his attempts at humour at the expense of his fellow members. I did and thought I would never start laughing. Poor John Ross has never had a face that looks like Adversity, whoever she may be, and to ask us all to share in the Section's support, that who knows who wore last time, can only lead to a potential pandemic on the same scale as bird or swine flu. Then on to blaming yours truly for Surrey not winning the Tri County Match in 2009 when you all know that my card must have been tampered with for I am sure the 4 and the 1 must have been reversed by some ill meaning and envious person or persons unknown.

Scotland v England and the

shortest paragraph in the newsletter. Just imagine how long that it would have been if the win had gone Scotland's way, not a paragraph more a book!

The section on Education I liked and if only its curriculum included English Grammar then maybe our Secretary in his Magazine section, when referring to my joining the Chipolatas, would realise that an apostrophe is only needed in the possessive case. And lastly, everyone knows that the so called photograph of me must have been altered, it's definitely my body but whose old bald head have they put on top? Thanks Ron 10 out of 10 for effort.

The Gentleman's Dinner at Walton Heath was a great success, the course was excellent, the weather was warm and sunny, an unexpected delight in early March and the meal, as always, very good indeed. One of my playing partners was Derek Farrington, a kindly but somewhat absent minded old chap who in his latter years really likes an electric trolley to help him round a golf course. He hired one from the pro shop and all went well until our 9th hole when the trolley appeared to run out of power. No amount of wriggling wires got it going and with regret Derek decided to leave it at the tee. He put his bag on his back and mumbling obscenities directed at the pro and all electrical goods continued on his merry way. We arrived at the green but before putting out we looked in astonishment at the said trolley as it raced driverless towards us. We thought that the next group had managed to repair it and sent it on its lonely journey but no we were told later that they had not. It had apparently decided, as they were approaching the tee, on self repair and rushed off, ran into the rough, toppled over, righted itself, hurtled between two bunkers and returned to Derek like a lost dog delighted in finding its master. It had a few more unplanned stops but did finish the round and if I could buy a trolley with that amount of intelligence I'd swap it for my sat nav any day.

Sorry almost forgot to report that the winner of the Ray Day Memorial Trophy was our very own Secretary, Mr W R Christie Esq'.

Yesterday March 6 was the Wedding day, in Leatherhead,

for Sara Worden and Course Manager Neil Gilham, Reigate Hill GC. Congratulations to you both from Surrey Greenkeepers.

Application forms for auditions for the Chippendales can be obtained from any committee member except myself. For the Chipolatas just forget all about stardom, wrap yourself in bacon, find a friendly turkey and wait for Christmas

Brian Willmott

Email brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk



Essex

Another dismal month on the weather front, though over the last few days it seems to have picked up a bit so lets hope we are through the worst of it.

We have just had our second committee meeting of the year and feel that we have made some good decisions. Firstly on the golf day front, and the most important, I'm sure, is the cost of the golf days. Entries for the rest of this year are capped at £15 Greenkeeper members and Section Sponsor's and £20 for Trade (Non Sponsor) & Guests.

We have standardised the prizes, making a much fairer system. With the same prize values give out for the division winners and also runs throughout the four main events. We have done the same for the overall winner, who not only gets his place at the National Championship but gets the same value prize at each event. Trade and Guest prizes have also received the same treatment.

We have also dropped the Longest Drive in favour of two Nearest the Pins. This is a much more open way, allowing more players the chance of a prize.

Secondly, we have decided to have a blind pairs competition at our second event at Channels. The way this will work is that every player, plays his own game and then after everyone has finished the cards will be shuffled and drawn to find your partner. (a) It's a bit of fun and (b) it gives everyone a fair chance of winning if you get a good draw. The winning pair wins a place at the National.

You should by now have received your fixture book for the season (if you lose it, you will be able to download a new one from the website). We have done it this way to cut down on the postage cost. Over the last year we sent out a minimum of six mail shots which was at a big cost to the section. So this year we are sending out just the new fixture book, which will contain all the entry forms for the coming year. We will then remind you by email, nearer the day of the event. It's important to us that you let us have your current email address so we can contact you quickly, so please if you have not yet done so, let me have them.

We have purchased a new laptop and digital projector, to keep records of the golf scores and it can also be used when we have any seminars or talks. We have also decided to project the starting times and results. So watch out at the golf days, from now on your scores will be in highlights, so you'd better get out on the range and hone that game to avoid embarrassment.

We welcome five new sponsors to the section this season, Advantage Environmental, BFS (Billericay Farm Services) BMS Products, Chaingreen Ltd (Sea Nymph) & Old Forge Mowers. I will publish the full list of all our sponsors next month.

The website has moved forward in leaps and bounds. I think we are nearly there with the main structure; I will from time to time make changes as and when is needed. Sponsors will have their own page as well as a link to their site. The interesting thing for us is that you will be able to see any special deals or tips they might have at the touch of a key. The addition of a new style photo gallery will make for some interesting comments I'm sure. There will be one for every event through the season.

The Forum with a Login is now working and although I have had a few glitches, I think it is all right now, try it and see if it is still giving a problem get in touch.

Plans are still ongoing for an education seminar later in the season, but watch out on the website for training courses that Paul will be running throughout the year.

I understand that Antony Kirwan did very well at the

Walton Heath Gentleman's Dinner event the other week, finishing in second place in the 0 - 10 category and taking the Longest Drive to boot. Well done Antony and well done to the others from our Section that made the trip, I understand it was a good day out.

Ben Scrivener, long time deputy at Benton Hall, is on the move, taking the Head job at New Malton Golf Club near Royston, in Hertfordshire. Well done Ben and good luck in your new position, I for one, know you will do well. We hope to see you at some of our events, when you've got yourself established in your new position.

I look forward along with the rest of the committee to seeing as many of you as possible at our first Golf day at South Essex Golf Club.

Tuesday, April 27. Smart Casual Dress. 12.30pm, Start time. One tee Start. Full details can be obtained from the website.

If you have any news for this magazine or the website please contact me by email: essex-bigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer.



Kent

There are many things in life which are uncertain and very often, unlikely. Such as Millwall winning a trophy, for instance. And we often say, "That'll happen when hell freezes over", never really understanding or appreciating what that could actually be like.

Well, few would have believed that a humble group of greenkeepers from Kent would ever grace the links of one of the greatest golfing regions in the world, but, on a day when hell actually did freeze over in a continuous blast of ferocious, arctic winds that had brass monkeys crying as if they'd lost certain vital organs, the men of Kent played Princes Golf Club.

On arrival at Princes, we were greeted by an odour so bad in the car park that we were, at first, appreciative of the wind to stop us all from being violently ill. The order of the day as far as attire

went was to get as many layers on as possible to protect yourself from the cold and not to worry too much about what having the flexibility of a breeze block what do to your golf swing.

The course itself was fine, albeit in a very much "under construction" state as pretty well every bunker was undergoing a major re-vamp. Recent rains in these areas had produced the best revetted ponds I've ever seen. It was, however, firm and fast as any true links should be. A prospect for any budding inventors soon became apparent not too long into the round. After picking my bag up for the umpteenth time after it had yet again blown over during my backswing, it became apparent that at such wind prone venues a traditional two-legged bag stand is woefully inadequate. So if someone could design a sturdier option, and I'd recommend something with guy ropes, I reckon they could corner the market.

On reaching the halfway point and discovering that there was no hot refreshments available we manfully willed ourselves on to do further battle with the back nine. The wind at this point had reached such an intensity that even the seagulls had upped sticks and gone somewhere far more sensible. Unfortunately, an extremely notable absentee at this point was Vic Maynard, from Ernest Doe, who regularly patrols all the venues we visit offering sustenance in the form of various tonics and refreshments to help us survive whatever nature throws our way. At Princes, Vic's wagon was deemed inappropriate making battle with the elements all the harder. Playing golf in any shape or form was now becoming almost impossible as the wind got colder and bodies stiffened up. 36 brave men managed to complete their rounds, however, and after defrosting in the showers for an hour or so, were rewarded with a lovely dinner. Results as follows: 1. Adam White, North Foreland GC 34 pts; 2. Steve Gunner, Wildernesse GC, 34 pts (count-back); 3. Michael Roberts, Knole Park GC, 33 pts; Longest Drive, Mark Roach, Redlibbits GC, and Nearest the Pin to Darren Child, Hawkhurst.

I would also like to thank Matt Pledsted and Kevin O'Neil, of Muswell Hill GC, for being two very welcome guests on the day.

Our usual post match dinner couple of pints was cut surprisingly short at Princes unfortunately. Indeed, we had barely put our spoons down from pudding when Kev was ushering us out the door as he was designated driver for the day therefore, if he can't drink, no-one can!

One low point of the day was the cost incurred to the Section by eight members, who had promised to attend four days before the event, but decided not to go, for whatever reason, after we had confirmed numbers with Princes. The club, rightly, charged us for the numbers we queried them and, as a result, it cost the Section several hundred pounds of your money. After a long discussion with the committee we have decided that, in order to safeguard Section funds for everyone's utilisation, we shall now be asking for payment up-front for future events. I know this decision will not bother our regular attendees who appreciate the efforts we go to as a committee and the importance of sponsors contributions which have bailed us out on more than one occasion.

I don't want to finish on a low note so I will just say a big thanks to Clive Osgood for organising another fantastic Annual Gentlemen's Dinner at Walton Heath Golf Club. Ian McMillan's course was, as ever, absolutely superb (and the weather was good!).

Roll on Spring
Best of British
Rob Holland
www.kentgreenkeepers.com



London

The season is just around the corner and it won't be long until we are all moaning about heat and lack of water. I for one can not wait for the season to start.

Not a lot to report this month, just one month to go before our first event which I think we all know is at Ealing Golf Club. To be held on May 20 and if you have not entered yet, make sure you do it soon. Greg Evans is going to show us the course at its best I am sure. The cost of the day includes golf plus a meal for just £20! This tournament is

getting full already with a second list of entries for other section members. Remember this is also the National qualifier. The first and second place winners will get their expenses paid trip to the National Championship at The Berkshire. After all the debate don't miss your chance to have a closer look!

Here is a reminder of fixtures coming up in the section-
2010 Fixtures

The spring tournament, May 20 at Ealing Golf Club

The Summer Tournament will be held on July 21 at Muswell Hill Golf Club. We will have a BBQ after the golf with golf dress welcome all day, so no need for your shirt and tie. Also the club's Brewery is going to be supplying a bar on the course, plus Sherriff Amenity will also be there with another halfway hut!

The Turkey Trot will be held at Wyke Green Golf Club on December 2. This will be another great day in the calendar.

Please if you have any questions or suggestions on the section please contact us.

You can call or use the web site www.biggalondonsection.co.uk.

South West and South Wales



South Wales

As I write this column, it is still bitterly cold and I m sure that most of us turf professionals are still wondering when spring is going to come along and thaw our greens out! Mind you, by May you will be so busy that you may meet yourself coming back and your summer strimmer boys have, with no warning at all, gone to Glastonbury for a long weekend!

I am also typing this and sending it up to HQ quickly before March's edition of GI comes out, as I did poke fun at a few people last month and want to get April's column to print before I get advised to 'tone it down a bit'. On reflection, it did seem a little harsh to infer that Gerald Orme looked like a gnome as he doesn't have a beard, or to my knowledge, any interest in

angling. Sorry Gerald!

Anyway, back to the Section. Here's what events are taking place in April:

April 14 - Evening lecture visit to Celtic Manor 2010 Course. Tour of facilities with Jim McKenzie before return to maintenance compound for a comparison between the upcoming Ryder Cup and the last Ryder Cup at Valhalla. Jim will be joined by Chris Sealey & Mike Nash who worked on the support team during the Valhalla Ryder Cup. Meeting at 5:30 to 8:30. Event as always sponsored by Countrywide Turf & Amenity. Our thanks to Martin and Peter for their continued support.

April 22 - 'When the Circus Comes to Town' South Wales Spring Seminar at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club. This year's topic is preparation and recovery from tournament golf and we have lined up four top course managers to give us a 12 month calendar covering all aspects of preparing for, hosting and then recovering from a tournament. The speakers are Gordon Moir, St. Andrews Links Trust; Huw Morgan MG, Ashburnham GC; Ian Kinley, Royal Porthcawl GC, and Jim McKenzie, Celtic Manor Resort. They will be joined by Richard Windows, from the STRI, who will be discussing the Open Championship and the STRI & R&A's input from an agronomic point of view. The tournaments featured will be The Open, Ryder Cup, European Seniors Open & Home Internationals. This year's event is sponsored by Farmura Environmental so our thanks go to Jonathan Harmer, Gerald Orme, David Binks & Peter Lacey for their continued support of our Section. The day starts at 9:30 and will finish at 3:30 and the cost is £20 per ticket limited to 50 places.

A personal thanks go out to everyone (about 40) who attended the recent Avoncrop Amenity Seminar at Ashburnham GC. Feedback I've received so far has been very good so I m glad that people enjoyed it. So a big thank you to Huw Morgan MG and everyone from Ashburnham and to all the speakers.

Thanks go out from the section as well to Martin Townsend and Peter Holstrom, from Countrywide Turf And Amenity, for their sponsorship of the evening lectures again this year. I have learned my lesson about pre-



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

The problem of exhibitions has raised its head again, this time thanks especially to the efforts of Pitchcare. As you may have read on my recent posting on the Open Forum section of the BIGGA Bulletin Board, Pitchcare's Managing Director, Dave Saltman, is brokering a move by the trade who demand a unification of BTME and SALTEX, with the new show taking place at a new venue, the one suggestion being the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham.

Just who is represented in this broad use of the term 'Trade' we have yet to discover, but it is a matter of fact that a number of current exhibitors at either BTME or SALTEX have become unsettled and now seek change. This where the dilemma starts with no real consensus as to what suits the majority of exhibitors. The options floated are endless: an annual show; a biennial show; indoor; part indoor, part outdoor; at the NEC, elsewhere in the UK, retain BTME and SALTEX, before Christmas, after Christmas, to be run by BIGGA and/or the IOG, run by the 'Trade'.

But what of the visitors, what are they looking for and what will they support? Clearly the IOG and BIGGA have some serious thinking to do and perhaps we will need to do some in depth market research of our own.

I am pleased to confirm that Kubota (UK) Limited and Charterhouse Turf Machinery Limited will be the principal sponsors for the National Championship for the second year running. Their financial support in these difficult times ensures the viability of this popular event that this year will be held at the Berkshire Golf Club at the beginning of October.

I am working with the Board to produce a formal document on the Governance of the Association and this will be available shortly. The initial draft will be published in the Members' area of the BIGGA website and it will be built upon over the coming months. There will also be published full details of the Board and the Sub Committees and I hope that this will facilitate improved communications and a better understanding of how the Association works.

As the first three months of this year slip by, somewhat quickly it seems to me, then our attention in the golfing calendar turns to Augusta and The Masters. No doubt greenkeepers everywhere can expect the usual complaints as golfers compare the condition of their course with that of Augusta. You have my sympathy. Let's hope that we have a good Spring and Summer and then we may see some optimism emerging for the future welfare of golf clubs and the game.

Finally, keep an eye on the BIGGA website, the redesigned version is shortly to be released and will have many new features including enhanced security and the facility to make on line payments, including membership renewal.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive

dicting what some events will be like before they happen!

So I will have a full report on the Swalec Stadium talk and the Ffos Las talk in next month's GI. Weather, fire, crowd trouble and act's of God permitting!

Hwyl

Ceri Richards

celticceri@aol.com



South West

Good day people, Firstly, let's get straight to business.....Laurence Pithie MG, was once one of Europe's busiest greenkeepers. This said Laurence still has a huge passion for his industry. Laurence, left Minchinhampton in 1992, went on to spend a number of years in America as Director of Maintenance for Crown Golf. During this time he had overall responsibility for the budgets, work programmes, equipment purchasing, national accounts and so so much more. During these years in the green-keeping world Laurence also surveyed over 100 golf courses, from countries such as Spain, Portugal, France and Ireland. Laurence spent this time to formulate plans and budgets along with recommendations to financial directors..... I must say, this is only a very small insight into what Laurence has given our industry, he has now moved on set up "Turf master one". Turf Master one is a personnel service which can help in both training and consultancy work. This takes me on perfectly to announce that Laurence will be presenting a workshop at Minchinhampton new course on April 15. What better person could give such a workshop. The workshop is titled PLANNING & BUDGETING, this will be aimed at people in or moving into a management position. This is the first of many to come, so watch out for others to follow.

Back at Minchinhampton, I turned up for work last Monday, stepped into the office to have the morning discussion with Paul and Dave. Paul looks up and says the machine will be here around 9am (deep drill machine, 18 inches), I thought to myself, thanks, just what I wanted to hear on a Monday morning.

However the machine turned up and we carried out the task covering three greens in four days in what could be by far the best weather we have had this year. For those of you who are unaware of this machine, it has 60 drill pieces being 18 inches in depth, when you first see the machine in action, I must say it is pretty impressive. We have done a number of greens over the years mainly on the Cherington course, and I have to say the improvement is pure brilliance.....trust me your not thinking that while carrying out the work though

Our Section's fixture list will be you shortly, I do realise that it can be difficult to attend some of these dates, but please make every effort come along to as many possible. You all know how good these events are and I'm sure you all enjoy catching up with everyone! Our first golf date will see the return of the greenkeeper amateur, look out for you invitation for this..... I'll look forward to seeing you there.

As always people please feel free to contact me with any short story you have.

adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk

07732503855



Devon & Cornwall.

At the time of reading this, our winter season of events will have been completed with our last meeting at Mullion Golf Club in March. It has been an extremely successful calendar of events and the numbers have been very healthy. A huge thank you from the section for all your support.

It was a very busy February for the Section starting with our Section meeting at Torquay Golf Club on Thursday, Feb 11. Even the "English Riviera" didn't escape the winter conditions with frozen soils and a biting cold wind. Nevertheless, Tim Martin (Head Greenkeeper) and the team provided an extremely tidy and well-presented course, which was enjoyed by the 65 strong crowd of attendees, 38 of which were led by Tim on an extremely interesting yet chilly

course walk. A very welcome "Carvery" lunch, enjoyed by all the attendees, was followed by a presentation by Laurence Pithie (Turfmaster One). Laurence, who is extremely well respected throughout the industry, gave an educational presentation on Effective turf management "Getting the Basic's Right!" The presentation showed photographs and case studies from Laurence's vast portfolio of experiences overseeing many courses through his career. Many thanks to Laurence from the Devon and Cornwall Section for finding the time and making the trip down to us. The Golf format for the day was individual medal, with three handicap categories receiving the prizes. Category 1 - Jason Brooks (Net 71), Category 2 - Steve Green (Net 69) Both from Torquay. Category 3 - David Daw (Net 65) from Porthpean. These three all qualify for a place at the National Championship at The Berkshire Golf Club, in October, paid for by the Section. The Stableford points winner for the day was Tony Hursey (39 pts). The day was an extremely successful one and many thanks to Torquay Golf Club for making everyone feel so welcome and providing such fantastic facilities. A big thank you to Tim Martin (Head Greenkeeper), Jason Brooks (Assistant Head Greenkeeper) and the rest of the team for all their hard work on the day and leading up to the meeting.

On February 17, 70 Greenkeepers and Sports Turf Managers from across Devon and Cornwall attended the second seminar jointly organised by the Devon and Cornwall Section and Duchy College. The theme of this seminar aimed at developing the audiences understanding of Greenkeeper management techniques and the resultant impact on golf and sports turf playing surfaces. In the morning session Steve Gingell, Regional Area Manager STRI, took the attendees through the principles of the STRI's "Disturbance Theory". Steve presented a detailed case outlining the balance and implications between turf maintenance operations and their results on named turf grass genera and species with their own individual and specific preferred growing and habitat requirements. The afternoon speakers developed this theme through taking a detailed look at

the soils, root zone and growing conditions needed by grasses. Andrew Turnbull, from Allturf Management, explained the function of sugars and carbohydrates within the plant and the consequences to the grass plant and the soil life in his lecture titled "Carbohydrates/The Brix of Life". Mark Atkins, from Soil Harmony, in his talk titled "Life Beneath Your Feet" developed this theme further emphasising the symbiotic relationship between the turf grass plant and the soil life.

On February 25 there was an "Environmental Policies" Workshop, held at the Duchy College. Mathew Worster, from Minchinhampton Golf Course, and this year's winner of the Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year Award, explained that he was employed as Environmental Officer within the Club as well as a Greenkeeper, allowing him to action the environmental policy, which has been in place for 10 years and has all round support from the golf membership. The second speaker was Graeme Gallimore, Launceston Golf Club Course Manager, who spoke about the early stages of writing and presenting his environmental policy to the Golf Club Committee for their approval. He had significantly less resources available than Minchinhampton Golf Club but had a long list of actions that he was keen to implement.

Colin Webber, Owner of Portmore Golf Club and Chairman of the Devon and Cornwall Section of BIGGA, was the final speaker of the day. He gave details of a number of environmental based projects that he had implemented and argued that it would be better to act voluntarily and all golf clubs would need to take this issue much more seriously in the future.

A big thank you to everyone who has been involved in putting together meetings, seminars and workshops this year. Special thanks to Graeme Gallimore, Colin Webber and also Ron Skinner and all at Duchy College.

As usual, I am always looking for stories and events to include in these notes each month. Please feel free to contact me.

George Pitts

Devon & Cornwall Section Secretary

07929 75401

gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com