

up to date version of their talk. They will have just released it at Harrogate but we will be the first of the Sections. Hopefully you will have had the flyer for the day already and this is just a reminder. As with any thing that you need to ask contact me at chrisbitten@btinternet.com or by phone 07796887633

The fixtures are out for this year and no doubt Kev will tell you about them when it's his turn to write this piece. You will have had your fixture cards by now but if not, they will be on your door mats very soon.

I hope everyone who went to Harrogate Week got something worthwhile out of it and made new friends and met up with old ones

I look forward to seeing you at Canford

Chris Bitten



South West

Hi everyone, I realise 2010 is in full swing now however allow me to wish you all the very best for the year ahead and I hope the ball runs smoothly for everyone, whatever it is you have going! As I write this I guess you're all getting ready for Harrogate, however by the time you read this Harrogate will all be over. So, I hope everyone had a great time and I'm sure your all agree with me by saying what a fantastic week it was.

I would like to congratulate Paul Farragut, from Chipping Sodbury. Paul won this year's Section competition and with that had the opportunity to attend Harrogate this year completely free. This was made possible because of our patronage partners, a huge thank you to them for making this possible. If you would like this to opportunity next year, please hold fire and wait for the details to fellow.

What a great Christmas golf day we had. Firstly, thanks to Nobby for getting the weather just right again! Also hands up if you thought that was one of the best raffles we've had, I think so! We played this year's event at Taunton & Pickeridge, and the course (and club house) was in super condition. It was brilliant

to have a great number attend and even better that we had 10 or so turn out for the course walk. Jeff, many thanks to you for giving us the opportunity of the course walk and also to you and your guys for presenting a wonderful golf course!!

Now for the winners, in third place Paul Garland, Lansdown, with 36pts. In second place Richard Louisson, Cirencester, with 37pts and in first place Stuart Broom, Lyme Regis, with 38pts. Well done guys.

We all know that these last couple of weeks have been just a complete nightmare weather wise. Hard frosts and snow makes doing anything far from easy. For example, getting into your car on the way to work on a Wednesday morning..... as Chris Sealey recently found out. Chris started his day like any other winter's morning, opened the car, set the heating on full, de-iced the windscreen and then had his cup of coffee to help him start the day! To his surprise, when Chris went back to his car, the doors were locked, keys in the ignition and the engine still going....."OH DEAR" comes to mind. At least the full tank of diesel he had wasn't going to waste. After phoning to the AA, they weren't a great deal of help as the car was still sat on the driveway. Unfortunately there was no spare key either, the only thing left is to smash a window....."OH DEAR" comes to mind again!!! Chris did make it to work that morning, everyone who saw the window had to ask the question, "What happened there Chris??" Fortunately a quick phone call to Auto Glass and the matter was solved.

While I write I have to tell you that I've just watched my first Cadburys cream egg advert, this wouldn't normally be a problem, however I do still have the Christmas tree in the corner, ummmm interesting.....

A quick plea to everyone, please make every effort to attend as many things as possible this year, both education and golf days, I for one look forward to seeing you all at some point during 2010. If you have any news/stories that you would like to share please do so. You all have my e-mail address and my phones always on. Look forward to hearing from you.

Adam Matthews,
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John Pemberton
Chief Executive

What a month January turned out to be - the worst period of snow and frost for many years and on the upside, arguably the best event in Harrogate that we have ever produced.

We came back after the Christmas break somewhat concerned that the weather would prevent a great many people from attending. As the snow disappeared, almost to order, the worry then was that time off work would not be allowed as greenkeepers and groundsmen attempted to get their facilities back into play. We need not have lost any sleep, demand for education was unprecedented and the visitors came in their thousands. Many exhibitors reported a record show and those who attended the Social Night were treated to an evening of fun, friendship and good food.

Thanks are due to Ransomes Jacobsen for its sponsorship of both the Social Night and the International Summit that took place earlier in the week. It was BIGGA's turn this year to host this annual event that brings together representatives from greenkeeping associations from around the world to discuss matters of common interest.

Sadly, not all trade companies played by the book and since the exhibition I have had reports of representatives doing business while walking about without being a bone fide exhibitor. Unfortunately I do not have any hard evidence of such rogue trading and would be interested to hear from any member who can substantiate these claims. I have a list of companies that are suspected of such dealings and rest assured they will be closely monitored if they turn up at Harrogate in 2011 and are not an exhibitor.

Plans are already under way for next year's Harrogate although at this stage we are lead to believe that the large machinery manufactures will not be in attendance. It's a great pity because with a change to how they spend their budget they could all make a valuable contribution towards the week's success and raise their own profile at the same time.

As we move into 2010 then the sights at BIGGA HOUSE are clearly set on three main areas: (1) Developing the value of being a member, (2) increasing the provision and take-up of education and (3) improving the positioning of the Association in the sports turf industry. The coming year will present many challenges and although the country has been declared as officially having come out of recession nevertheless it will take some time for this to filter through into the sports and leisure industry. Will the golf industry in particular ever be the same again? I, and many others, think not however the Board and Staff will be looking to the future and will make every effort to meet members' needs while working in close partnership with other allied bodies to develop the Association.

Finally, I would like to wish Neil Hayward, of the English Golf Union, a long and happy retirement. Neil retires after many years of serving the golf industry having specialised of late in giving advice on aspects of child protection as applicable to golf clubs. Good Luck Neil and I look forward to meeting up with you on a golf course somewhere.