

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

Congratulations from everyone in the Section to Andy Mellon on being elected Vice Chairman of BIGGA. All on the committee realise this will be the start of a busy period for him and the hunt is on to find a replacement Sec/Treasurer for the end of this year. Committee member Donald Gardener, from Scoonie GC, braved the chilly waters of the Firth of Forth off Leven on Boxing Day for a sponsored swim and raised over £1,000 for the children's cancer charity, Sergeant. Well done to Donald who at the time of writing this will be swimming again off St Andrews on Valentine's Day. Twelve greenkeepers attended an excellent training day on managing performance which was held at Ladybank GC, January 29. Organised by the CMAE, this was the first of what we hope will be an ongoing series of events where members of both Associations can benefit from attending joint training seminars that are appropriate to Greenkeepers and Club Managers alike. This follows an agreement at National level between some of the different organisations in the industry and we would encourage CMAE, GCMA, and PGA members to attend some of our upcoming events arranged for the following months.

At Elmwood on Wed. March 17, Kenny Liddle, of Bayercrop Sciences, will talk on the future of pesticides and on Tues. April 27, Stan Zontek, of the USGA, and John Kaminski, of Penn State, will talk on winter damage to turf. Both talks will be at the

training room at the golf course and begin at 7pm, lasting for an hour approx. Details will be on the website www.bigga-central-section.org.uk and members should shortly be getting their entry form for the spring outing which will be held at St Andrews on Tuesday, April 6, over the Eden Course. Numbers are restricted slightly so return your entry form quickly to guarantee a place.

Gordon Moir



Ayrshire

Hello everyone, hope you've managed to get some of your winter projects completed around the freezing weather conditions we've experienced this Winter. Hopefully this indicates a hot Summer to come, or is that a bit optimistic?

The Spring Outing is to be played at Largs Kelburn on Tuesday, April 27, with the Scottish National being contested over Murcar GC on June 17.

I was saddened to hear that Ian McKay had passed away recently after what I believe to be complications from an illness. Ian was a regular attendee at our Section events when he worked in the trade and I had the good fortune to play a few rounds with him at these events. Ian was a gentleman, a great character and will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with Ian's family and friends at this sad time.

As you are reading this I will have started my new job in Germany, at a lovely course up in the mountains, east of Cologne. At time of writing they have 40cm of snow lying so maybe I'll have a little time to settle in before the snow clears and the hard work begins!

Don't worry though I'm sure they'll be queueing up to take over this reporting lark. I believe there may already be one willing to step into the breach, eh Johnny boy?

Any news or comments please don't send to me! but if you want to say Hello or "What chu doin ya crazy fool!" then send it to denis.t@hotmail.co.uk

Auf wiedersehen, bis spater!
Denis Tweddell



North

As I am writing this month's article the snow seems to have relented and we can all get on with our respective winter programmes. If you do have a sizeable workload to complete then hopefully you won't be held up any more.

I feel sorry though for Muir Ross, at Ballindalloch Golf Club. The first time the snow made an appearance, there was so much snow lying on his machinery shed roof that it brought down the whole lot. Luckily there was nobody in there at the time it happened. That's little consolation to him and the club. I hope that everything works out for you and that you get back on your feet again and that there's not too much damage.

On the staffing side of the Section, David Stephen has made the step up to Deputy Head over at Kintore Golf Club. He has moved from Meldrum House Golf Club. Kenny has assured me that you will be sorely missed by him and the rest of the lads, there.

By the time you read this article the Scottish Conference in Dunfermline will have passed us by and a report will follow in next month's edition. It is very well supported so hopefully

the North Section had a good attendance.

Not a lot else to report in these Winter months so hopefully I'll have some more news for you next month.

Ben Brookes
07813889374



West

What a difference a month makes or at least I'm hoping that's the case as in the months of December, January and early February when I prepare this we've had only three weeks of weather and ground conditions which would allow course work to be tackled. At least the trees are all trimmed and wooded areas are looking the best they've ever been but pity help the guys with no tree work, those sheds must be so well organised by now and the machines in tip top condition.

Well what's been happening over the peace other than my home club burning down I would say not a lot, I would extend my regards to East Kilbride Golf Club at this time with all the hassle and problems a situation like this could cause. East Kilbride have over recent years held various events for the Section and we hope everything runs as smoothly as it can in these circumstances.

Just to let members know the Spring outing will be held at Lanark Golf Club on April 29 and the Autumn venue will be Helensburgh on September 2, both of which we have played in the past, but are excellent venues and should be a joy to play if past experience is anything to go by.

All those people at Harrogate in January should have enjoyed a great show with plenty of

equipment exhibited and a variety of other distributors showing their wares. I thought the exhibition was first class and was able to obtain all the information I needed, even seeing a few things never viewed before. Can I extend my thanks to those people who helped make my trip enjoyable Scott, Jim, Mark, Neil, Stuart, Gerry, Brian, David, and, finally, Suz, Looking forward to that bowls exhibition game from you and Scott though.

Can I extended my congratulations from the Section to Chris Yeaman the newly appointed Course manager at Royal Burgess Golf Club who started on March 1. I hope he enjoys his new challenge. Chris moves from West Linton Golf Club, a course which was always in good condition, so best of luck.

It is with great regret that I announce the death of Ian Mackay who died last month. A great supporter of the Section over the years. Ian was known as Mr Sisis and attended all the outings for more years than I can remember. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

The fixture list for 2010 will soon be on your doors allowing you plenty of time to plan for the season's activities. We thank Aitkens for the continued support in this area.

Finally, if members have any information for me please do not hesitate to contact me on 0141-942-5554, or mobile 07790823914, or by e-mail at st.greenkeeper@ukonline.co.uk.

Stuart Taylor

Northern Region



Northern

Hope you are all well, and ready to start your spring work programmes now that we can see the grass again. Hope everyone had a good and informative Harrogate Week, and, hopefully, found a bargain.

In mid December we held our Christmas Golf Tournament, at Ilkley Golf Club, everyone had a great day out. Our thanks go to Duncan and his team for

presenting such a good course despite being under Water the previous week. Thanks must also go to the event sponsors, County Mowers & Toro.

By the time this goes to print we should have a finalised list of this year's events in the post to you. We will be holding a regional seminar in March. It will be limited to the first 45 applicants so get you names down as soon as possible.

The Golf events will again be £20 to enter payable one week in advance of the event, payment to the Secretary or any committee member.

Any news or gossip please contact me, Frank Stewart on 07947 401278 72 West Park Grove, Roundhay, Leeds, LS8 2DY.

John Watts



Cleveland

Hello everyone, hope you are all fit and well. I can't believe how fast time goes by, it doesn't seem a month ago since I was last writing the newsletter. We will all have our fertiliser spreaders and mowers at the ready before we know it. Or is that just wishful thinking.

Harrogate has been and gone, hope you all had a good time and enjoyed the show. I thought the show was fairly quiet compared to previous years, maybe a sign of the current economic climate with golf clubs expenditure limited, and the fact that the snow just cleared perhaps meant staff were staying on their courses getting work under way.

None the less, it was yet again extremely well run by the staff at BIGGA. I am pleased that Mr Graham, of Bishop, managed to stay conscious this year after a few beers. Well done Phil! Once again, Terry Charlton put on his bus, so thanks Terry for your continued support.

On January 21, Ian Pemberton, Ian Holoran, Bob Lawton and I attended the funeral of the late John Gregory. The service was a fitting tribute and also very moving. There were others in attendance from the turf profession.

Other news as follows. Dave Cuthbertson, and the lads at

Rockcliffe Hall Golf Club, would like to thank, and wish all the best, to Adam McFarlane, who is leaving the team to join his lady in Canada at the end of the month. This leaves a position for a trainee at Rockcliffe starting in March.

Before I forget, the autumn golf tournament will be held at Rockcliffe Hall on Wednesday, October 13. The fee will be £30 for golf and a meal. Although this is more expensive than the usual £15, let's not forget that Rockcliffe Hall is one of Europe's longest courses and is a championship standard golf venue, that normally costs £95 per round. I predict this to be a highly demanded day so book early. Further details will follow in the coming months. BE AWARE THOUGH, BIGGA MEMBERSHIP CARDS MUST BE SHOWN AND YOU MUST BE A MEMBER.

Spring Tournament, Seaton Carew Golf Club, Tuesday, March 23. Tee Off 10am 'til 11am

A big thank you to the Secretary, Tony, and his lads for inviting us to host the spring tournament on their lovely course, I know I say this for all the golf events but they are really popular with entries being turned away so it is in your interest to get your place reserved ASAP. Lloyds has kindly offered its continued support and will be providing the prizes for the day. The cost is again £15 to include bacon bun on arrival and a two course meal. Send cheques made payable Cleveland BIGGA Section and send to Ian Pemberton, 6 Rosewood Court, Marton, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS7 8QR or pay Alistair in cash if he is calling in to see you. No entries on the day. Members only BIGGA CARDS REQUIRED ON THE DAY

Cutting Technology and After Cut Appearance, Wednesday, April 2 17.30pm, Teesside Golf Club. With the help of Alistair, from Lloyds, we have been able to acquire the expert knowledge of Ian Sumpter, Lely's National Training Manager, to give us enlightenment on all principles and factors that affect clip, unit configuration and after cut appearance.

Any news, contact Kev on 07921817857 or kevscarce@aol.com

Kevin Scarce



North Wales

Here we go with the days finally lengthening now, all we need is some heat to follow to kick start our turf into some meaningful growth. We'll all be preparing for our spring maintenance programmes to get underway now, so the longer days and hopefully some heat would help us enormously with that I think we've all had enough of dithering in sub-zero temperatures this last winter.

The seminar that took place at Eaton Golf Club on February 23 was very well attended and thankfully the speakers were all very engaging with varied, interesting topics that kept our attention all day. I do have to apologise to anyone that wanted to hear the drug awareness part of the day as advertised in this column last month, due to unforeseen circumstances, we were unable to have that talk in this seminar but we are hoping to have an autumn seminar with that and other subjects later in the year. We have to thank Eaton Golf Club for the use of their facilities, the lovely catering and warm welcome that was extended to us all.

The spring tournament takes place this year at Caernarfon Golf Club a new venue to me and well worth a visit or so I've been reliably informed.

As ever do appear to be slightly lacking in local news but feel free to contact me if you have any news to pass on to the rest of the Section.

All the best until next month.

Pete Maybury petemayb66@aol.com 07756001187



Sheffield

Hello everyone,

I hope you are all finally getting over those winter blues and are getting ready for the challenges of a new season.

As some of you may know Andy Bunting has had a career change and has bought the

lease on Popa's bar. in Anderby Creek, which is near Mablethorpe. If any of you are in the area Andy would love to see you for a drink or two. Good luck Andy from everyone in the Sheffield Section.

Our Spring lecture will be held at Rotherham GC on March 11. The speaker will be Eddie Seaward, Head Groundsman at the All England Lawn Tennis Club (Wimbledon). I hope that many of you will attend what will be a very interesting afternoon listening to how Eddie goes about preparing Championship tennis courts.

We have also organised a Machine Maintenance-Workshop Management Aay in association with Golf and Turf Machinery. This will be held at Hallamshire GC. You will all receive more information about this day closer to the time.

We are in the process of producing a Section polo shirt. It was discussed at the AGM that we haven't got a team uniform when playing in golf matches against other Sections. The committee has decided that it would be best if we made these shirts available to all members for a small fee which will be decided when we have been given a full quotation. We are in the process of getting a shirt printed for members to look at and give their views.

It was discussed at our last committee meeting at the possibility of having a Dinner dance/Presentation evening. Many of you should have received a letter giving more details on this. If you could please let me, or Ian Whitehead, know if you are interested so we can decide whether or not we should press forward with the idea.

I look forward to seeing many of you at these upcoming events. If you require any more information on the above events or have any other issues please dont hesitate to contact me.

James Stevens
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07738719614

Section Notes

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by the 5th of the month

Midland



East of England

Belated Happy New Year to all.

Apologies for the lack of writings in the last couple of months, a lack of things to say in December and then the general craziness of Christmas and the weather subsequently meant I didn't get things written on time. Did I also mention I was having new windows put in my house!

At the time of writing this all the snow seems to have disappeared, the temperatures have returned to around about normal and regular winter service has been resumed. While the snow is always nice to look at, the novelty wears off after a while and the reality of the problems it is causing to the course and the finances of the club become stronger.

The beginning of the recent cold spell came way back on December 17, the day the East of England Section hosted its annual Christmas Event at Seacroft, in sunny Skegness. The sight of two of their greenkeepers working near the 1st tee dressed as arctic explorers set the tone for the day. However, 30 brave players donned as many layers as possible and set off on the downwind front 9. The sight of a LMS support wagon sporting a steaming hot vat of tomato soup behind the 9th green is something that most of us will never forget. Manned by LMS guys, Dave Hampshire and Steve Canner, a good 15 minutes was spent there by everybody to attack the back 9. It was then that the hail showers arrived! These showers made it impossible to look up and see where you were walking let alone leave you any ability to hit a golf ball. It is also a hindrance to putting when your ball collects so much hail on it that it arrives at the hole bigger than the hole itself! Bravely everyone struggled on and no-one walked in and "no man was left behind"! I would like to add that the showers in the clubhouse felt like they

had liquid magma coming out of them which certainly helped everybody thaw out.

Many thanks go to Seacroft for being an excellent host and providing a great meal for us, also to Tim and his staff for the excellent condition of the golf course. Thanks also to our sponsors, Lawn Mower Services Ransomes Jacobsen dealers, of Lincoln, for providing the soup along with a generous prize table. Your continued support is much appreciated.

The golf on the day was won by Ian Collett, of Rigby Taylor, and Gordon Street, from Selby Golf Club, with an amazing score. Second place went to Gary Salisbury, Burghley Park GC, and Steve Smedley, Mansfield Sands, and third place were Matt Smith, Cleethorpes GC, and Ian Benn, Greensman. Longest walk went to Bruce Hicks and R. Giller, Boston GC, who both received a leftover tin of soup!

The end of January also signals the passing of a regular on the January calendar, BTME at Harrogate. Despite the best efforts of the weather to scupper this years event, congratulations need to go to all involved at BIGGA and beyond for putting on another excellent show and education opportunity, and for all the companies who attended this years show. There was a buzz around all the Halls as, for the first time, every greenkeeper had something to say about the big topic of the moment, and I am not talking about 2mm, or anything to do with that, but how much snow they had had, how they had coped with it and how long places had been closed for.

As far as our Section goes, many thanks to all our sponsors who turned up to our drinks reception as a thank you for all their efforts and continued support. At our committee meeting, Graeme Macdonald was voted in as the new Vice Chairman, with all other committee positions remaining the same. A final thank you goes to Gary Cooper, STG Amenity Supplies, for his continued sponsorship of the two night stay for the two greenkeepers contributing to the Section throughout the year.

In an effort to attract more members to our golf days this year, we have reduced the number of fixtures and changed

the calendar round slightly. The first two events combined will be National Championship qualifiers, so attendance is a must for anyone interested in playing in this event this year. They will be held at Grimsby Golf Club and Tydd St Giles Golf Club, in May and July, respectively. Our big match vs the Trade section will be held at the start of September at Torksey. Hopefully a better date and a central venue will encourage more players to what is always an entertaining day out. Our AGM will again be in October, this year at Louth Golf Club and that will be followed by our ever popular Christmas Bring and Win fixture, this year at Sleaford Golf Club. All dates and times are still to be finalised and a fixture card will be sent out to everyone in due course. Many thanks to all golf clubs for allowing us courtesy of their courses and to all our sponsors for the upcoming season. If you have never been before please come along and support us, you will be made to feel very welcome and an enjoyable day is guaranteed.

Our Winter Seminar is being put together for March this year to be held at Newark Golf Club. An exact date will be sent out by letter in due course. Full details are yet to be confirmed, however there will be presentations on irrigation; construction materials, topdressing and where it comes from; and greens construction in warmer climes! Your support for this event will be much appreciated.

Roll on the spring!

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club. steveimmingham@aol.com



East Midlands

Hello Everyone. I hope you are all enjoying the unpredictable English weather. For those of you who attended Harrogate Week I hope you all had a good time and saw as much of the show as possible before the sweet whisperings of Wetherspoons and Charlie's lured you away!

Shows like Harrogate are of great importance to our industry, It gives many aspiring green-

keepers a chance to see what a fantastic industry we work in and if you put your heart and soul into it you can get so much in return.

A highlight for me was the 2mm Debate, it just goes to show the passion that can be created among men. My family and friends thought I was nuts when I said I was looking forward to sitting in a debate about the height at which you mow grass! Respect must go to all who sat on the Debate panel, being prepared to put themselves into such a public forum to talk about a topic that has caused the biggest debate within greenkeeping for many years.

All members of the Section should have by now received their fixture card for 2010. There is one small change to the printed details, the spring and summer tournaments are now both Stableford competitions rather than Medals! We look forward to seeing plenty of new faces as well as the older ones at the events this year. Hopefully by the time you read this you should have received the entry form for the pairs competition this year. I would encourage as many of you as possible to enter this, it is a great way to play some different courses and meet new people. If anybody wants to play but is struggling to find a partner then please get in touch as I'm sure we can sort something out.

At the latest East Midlands committee meeting, some great ideas for education days and social nights were discussed so keep your ear to the ground for them. Everyone on the committee would like to make sure that it is doing everything possible for its members, we can only provide a successful section if you, the members get involved. Please get in touch with either Andy de Wet or myself with ideas of what you would like to see in happen in your Section. It can be anything and all ideas welcome.

biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com

Matt Wormald

Section Notes

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South West and South Wales

South Coast

Hello and welcome to all the South Coast members. This is new to me, writing my first around the green report, as the committee are now taking it in turns to put pen to paper. So here goes!

No-one has passed on any news to me from my fellow greenkeepers or trade in our Section so that's a good start. I will just try and bore you myself.

Here at the Army Golf Club we are near completion of a new irrigation system to greens, tees and approaches complete with new tanks, pump house and control system. This project was long overdue and I'm looking forward to having a reliable management tool in place for the spring/summer, at a approx cost of £270,000.

Also under construction is a new greens complex on our 10th hole with an additional five new bunkers, making the hole more challenging, however with the course just thawing out from 8" snow cover at time of writing I wonder if it will ever be finished.

We are also undertaking a woodland management programme with selective removal of trees and scrub around greens and tees. It's surprising how quickly the woodland invades areas, blocking out much needed light and air movement.

Just returned from good old Harrogate where, under the current financial climate, I thought the exhibition passed off well. It was good to meet up with distant friends again.

I attended the big "2mm Debate" on the Wednesday morning with excitement expecting a good debate and discussion session but, my oh my, what a waste of time it turned out to be because it's all down to "Site Specific" as we were told on many occasions. Do we really care what someone else's greens run at on the Stimp, or what Height of Cut they use. No we manage our course to the needs of the business and to our own

"Site Specific". Enough said.

Now moving on to Wetherspoons, where do I begin.....

As you read this March is upon us thank goodness, and now we wait for temperatures to slowly rise so we can begin to think about our maintenance regime for this time of year hoping that the easterly winds we sometimes suffer do not appear and put things back. At the end of the day Mother Nature dictates to us what we can do.

If anyone has any news or interesting stories, or if your moving on then please contact your committee so that it can be included in the monthly round-up sometimes news doesn't travel as fast as you think.

Fred, from Alton GC, is next month's guest journalist so give him a call, all the best for the forthcoming year,

Phil Wentworth.



Devon and Cornwall

Unfortunately I am starting with some sad news. The following is a quote from Ron Skinner, Duchy College. "It is with a great degree of sadness that I have to report to Devon and Cornwall Section members that John Baker, Duchy College, died on January 27 after a long illness. John was well known to many greenkeepers as the "pesticide man" who carried out many NPTC Pesticides Assessments. In many private conversations with John, an extremely pragmatic and practical man, he reported to me, which clubs had good facilities and equipment, and which had less good and the associated "horror and comedy stories". We know who and where you are! Before John's sudden and early retirement due to his illness he worked closely with the greenkeeper industry in Devon and Cornwall and the Duchy greenkeeper team to ensure GTC Centre Approval and local training opportunities for greenkeepers in the area. Our thoughts are with his family. Ron Skinner, Steve Evans, Brian Summers, Terry Farkins and Duchy College.

Duchy College were host to two workshops run by Bernhard's a leading supplier of cylinder grinders, and supported by Toro.

On January 27 the Workshop, led by Ben Taylor, Training Manager at Bernhard's, provided technical information to the Level 2 groups on the importance of correct sharpening of mowing equipment to benefit sward quality, appearance, disease resistance, reduced fertiliser requirements and fuel efficiencies, and reduced machinery repair costs. Ben followed his presentation with a demonstration of the specialist grinding equipment and the set up of the cylinder mower to ensure quality of cut.

The Advanced Workshop, on January 28, to the Level 3 Greenkeeper group and an audience of BIGGA members, reviewed the above points. It carried out trials to demonstrate these issues using a mower incorrectly set up and the same mower correctly set up. The trials took place on the playing fields, removing and weighing the cuttings, measuring fuel efficiency and assessing quality of cut. The Level 3 Greenkeeper group have recorded the results and have been offered the opportunity to publish these in trade magazines with the successful candidate being provided with a prize by Bernhard's.

Ben commented that the STRI had provided research to support his company's claims regarding the improvements in the quality of turf appearance and that sports turf managers were required to meet ever rising standards of turf presentation.

Ron Skinner, Duchy College, considered that the workshops had provided specialist and up to date technical information to support the main syllabus. He was especially grateful to the support from the greenkeeper attendee's, Bernhard's, Toro and the many Duchy staff who supported the event.

Congratulations to Jeff Mills and Justin Austin on achieving their CPD Accreditation certificates. The Certificates are awarded to those who collect 10 CPD points or more per year for five consecutive years. Both Jeff and Justin were present at the Harrogate Awards Ceremony to receive their certificates.

Due to poor weather, our

meeting at Newquay, scheduled for January 10, had to be cancelled. We are hoping to schedule this meeting again for next year. Although Andrew Dunstan, Course Manager, Newquay was very disappointed, I know he had enough on his plate with the arrival of his newly born daughter "Neeve", born on Christmas day! Congratulations Andrew from all the section.

The next meeting will be at Mullion Golf Club, Cornwall. The usual format of Golf or a Course walk, followed by an educational presentation by "Brian Robinson, Director of Seed Research at Rigby Taylor. Gordon Tamblin, Course Manager, Mullion, has been a regular attendee at BIGGA meetings and it would be great to see good numbers at this meeting in order to support him and the Section. Please contact me if you are interested in attending the meeting or if you have any enquiries or information you would like me to include in these notes.

George Pitts
Devon & Cornwall Section
Secretary
07929 754401
gpitts.yelverton@gmail.com



South Wales

Hi Everyone
Firstly an apology. In February's edition of "Around the Green" I commented about the talk given by Swalec Stadium Head Groundsman Keith Exton, at Taff's Well Rugby Club, organised by the IOG and congratulated Keith on a fine talk. As you know, the talk was cancelled due to the snow and the only explanation I can give as to my glowing report is that I must have dreamed the whole thing!

I know it's sad that, where as I used to dream about exciting things - the one where Katherine Jenkins and Charlotte Church heard me singing in the bath and decided I needed singing lessons and insisted on joining me in the tub was one of my faves. I now dream about attending IOG evening lectures! It only goes to show, you should never take our weather for granted!

Anyway, back to the Section. On the education front there are a few events that I would like to bring to your attention.

Firstly, on Wednesday March 10, Complete Weed Control has organised an education seminar at Burghill Golf Club, Herefordshire. The theme of the day is Fertiliser and Pesticide Application. If you would like to attend then please give Alan Abel a ring. It should be a good day. Oh, by the way Alan, thank you on behalf of the Section for sponsoring the fixtures cards this year. We are truly grateful.

Next, on March 17, we have the evening meeting at Ffos Las Racecourse with a talk and tour given by Mr Tim Long, Clerk Of The Course. Meeting starts at 5.30, I believe, so if you would like to attend then please give Steve Chappell a ring.

Next month's details will be given about the Section's Spring Seminar which is to be held at Royal Porthcawl GC.

A get well soon message now to my dear friend, Julian Bartlett Jones, Course Manager at Dinas Powys GC who recently broke his arm after slipping in the snow while negotiating the treacherous walk from the clubhouse to his maintenance units (sheds). Now I know what your thinking! But Julian swears he hadn't been in the bar and that the only reason he smelled of drink was because while lying in the snow, he was rescued by a trained St Bernard with one of those little barrels around his neck. I thought it had brandy in it and not Strongbow, but there you go! Anyway, he ended up getting plastered at the local hospital. Seriously, I hope you have a speedy recovery.

Another date for your diary is the annual IOG Dinner at Taffs Well RFC on Friday, April 23. Rumour has it that a certain Graham Cox, a very good singer and who has probably worked at more golf clubs than Henry Stead even, will be providing the entertainment! It's always a very good occasion. Please ring for details.

And finally, congratulations to Peter Lacey for winning the Mumbles Tidiest Garden Competition. Peter has spent a lot of time there recently and the prize is just reward for his efforts. The centrepiece of the garden is a 4ft 10" gnome that he sculpted himself. Asked where he got his

inspiration, Peter said, "I just asked Gerald Orme to stand there holding a fishing rod for a few hours!"

Or did I just dream that last bit?

Don't forget, any news will be gratefully received.

Ceri Richards
07831 168645



South West

I hope you all had an enjoyable week in Harrogate, I know the guys from Minch did! During Harrogate Week Matthew Worster, from Minchinhampton, was invited to the awards dinner. Matt had won an award for golf course environment 2009 with STRI.

The other Wednesday while the guys were at Harrogate, I remember waking up in the morning to some pretty large snowflakes falling. I live in Stroud which is at the bottom of the hill, we didn't have any settled on the floor yet. On the way to work, I normally pick Will Harris up (our mechanic). Will lives half way up the hill. I had spoken to Will just before I left, he said it wasn't too bad just yet. At the time he was right. I got to Will safely and we set on our way, only about 50 yards up the road and climbing a couple of hundred feet the snow become heavier MUCH heavier! The car started to slide and we looked at each other and said "What the hell are we doing this for". While going up the hill I remember passing a car that had crashed into a brand new Saab, gutted! When at the top, we had to pull over, we just weren't getting anywhere and if we were it wasn't safely. During this time the traffic started to pick up. Will and I decided to watch some of the traffic before setting off again. People are crazy in the snow.....You should have seen this coach trying to get up the hill. It got itself stuck just on the bend taking up both sides of the road. A couple of landys tried to pull it up but had no luck. The driver of the coach gave it another go, a couple of minutes with full throttle and plenty of sliding he managed to free him-

self, I really have never seen a coach go up a hill sideways, with just its back end dragging along the grass bank. Watching the rest of the traffic go up and down the hill was just as entertaining, it later took me an hour to get home, and normally all it takes me about 10 minutes. When I got there I went back to bed, I thought I'll start this day again a little later!

Now that Harrogate Week is behind us, I hope that the bad weather has finished showing its face. What a truly awful winter we have had. Not only has it prevented us from golf course projects, it's prevented me from having any football (me without football on a Saturday = unhappy bunny!). I went through a period during December and January of only having two games in eight weeks, this now means I'm a busy man in February and March with rearrangements, nine fixtures in February in fact.

You'll remember our raffle we had at our Christmas Golfing day, a donation was made to "Help for Heroes" for £421, and this was the money collected from the raffle at Taunton & Pickering. Nice work Nobby!

People, our fixtures for 2010 will be with you shortly, we have some fantastic venues in place this year, and the greenkeeper amateur is also back. Im sure your make every effort to attend as many as possible, I look forward to seeing you all this year.

Remember, that you could forward any information/stories that you would like to be feeding into our Section's column. Please feel free to drop me an e-mail or even a phone call. I look forward to hearing from anyone.

adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk

Adam Matthews

South East Region



Kent

As I write this report in early February we are being hit being another bout of heavy snow compounding all the recent problems of travel, closed

courses and further loss of much needed revenue. Unfortunately, it was for those very reasons, which prevented my trip to Harrogate this year. I hope those of you who were able to justify making the journey found the show as useful and educational as it normally is.

The weather has played havoc with my preparations for the first outing of the year for our contingent of stalwarts to Prince's Golf Club on March 10. Personally, I haven't hit a ball since November last year so playing Prince's, which I hear is a course that demands accuracy, could be a tad tricky! Looking forward immensely to the day anyway and hopefully by then the conditions will have abated enough for another memorable day.

One piece of good news this month is the announcement of the birth of baby, Charlie. Congratulations to his very proud parents, Dan and Helen Jones.

Many thanks to all of the companies too who are still supporting us with sponsorship despite the lean times. A full list of all these noteworthy firms is displayed on our website. www.kentgreenkeepers.com

Don't forget you can contact me with any news, views, events or anything else you would like to see on these pages or on the website.

Sorry it's a short one this month. Must be the weather! (That's what I tell the wife anyway!)

Best of British
Rob Holland
07843 410755



London

Hello everyone,

Well another month has past. I am writing this having just got back from Harrogate. What a great week we had. It was great to see how many London Section members attended. The show like normal was very good with some interesting products on show. The educational seminars and workshops I attended were fantastic. BIGGA should be very proud of the standard of workshops they put on. I came

back feeling very motivated by the whole week. My staff that attended the week said they really enjoyed the experience and we are booked in for next year already.

We held an education day at Oaklands College on Feb 18 with over 137 attendees! That's got to be a record. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Andy Wight for organising a great day for us. I think everyone enjoyed it.

Let us know your feedback! We, the committee, and Andy Wight are thinking this should be an annual event. Is the time of year good for you? What about the Cost? Any speakers you would like to hear or what topics you would like covered?

Here is a reminder of fixtures coming up in the Section- The spring tournament, May 20, at Ealing Golf Club! Greg Evans is the greenkeepers' answer to Marmite, but this is your chance to play on the greens and experience what many golfers in the area are doing for just £20 including meals! This tournament is getting full already with a second list of entries for other section members. Remember to get your names in now so you don't miss out.

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.

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!

The Turkey Trot will be held at Wyke Green Golf Club on December 2. This will be another great day and a chance to play in a team event!

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.

Matt Plested
07818410333

Section Notes

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



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Surrey

Sorry for the non-appearance on Notes in the February magazine but there was a problem at HQ which I've spoken to Scott about.

January 4 2010. Minus 6 degrees centigrade, so brass monkeys beware for the ice-age cometh, although I still have reports that the ancient order of mad golfers is still playing in frost, snow and freezing conditions. With stimpmeter readings from 0 to 20 feet in length and 20 to 30 feet in height, these curious near-members of the human race continue to wander from temporary hole to temporary hole, hoping beyond hope that the green keepers have cleared the snow from the back 9 greens.

I wonder what the weather is like now that you are reading this in February 2010? Is it still freezing, as predicted, by our knowledgeable experts in the forecasting world, or has global warming returned. I hope so, for my heating bills have gone through the roof and I need you all this month to spend, spend, spend and forget about the so-called credit crunch.

Thank you Ashford Manor GC for your tremendous welcome and hospitality on December 9 and for allowing 60+ greenkeepers courtesy of your course. We had a fabulous day that included hot and delicious soup half way round and a turkey dinner that was exceptional. The back tees and long par fours were not a problem for me but for many players of shorter length it must have been difficult. But it was not that difficult for the winning team of Ron Christie, Jason Hunt, Jim Russell and Roger Tydeman. Runners up from Rotherhampton GC were Andy Foulds, Andy Hall, Andy Doulton and Jamie Cushing. Nearest the Pin, Gregory Richardson - Longest Drive, Ron Christie.

Look forward to seeing you all at the next golf day which will be the Gentlemen's Dinner at Walton Heath GC in March.

Sunday, February 7. I think it is time for me to re-enter the political arena but I have decided

that my party's name, on this occasion, should reflect what we all feel about our present MPs. 'BALLS' or Brian Against Lawful Larceny and Skulduggery. My party, if we can raise the necessary funding, will bring the politicians' expenses rules into general use so that we can all participate in helping ourselves to the UK's seemingly bottomless expenses pot. Of course, the rules and regulations that have proved so generous to the current lot must be changed so that only the most deserving of me, sorry I mean us, can collect the rewards which honesty, hard work and greed can justify. Hopefully, when I am elected, these new watertight rules will not yet have been resolved and my claim for my second home on the Isle of Wight will be passed without a second glance. All donations to 'BALLS' should be sent to my Political Manager Mr Douglas Iolanthe Fernie, care of the Fat Ox public house in Upminster.

But now, until fame and fortune are bestowed upon me it's DADDIES and MUMMIES of the Month. Congratulations to Alan Johnston, Epsom GC, and his partner, Nina, who said hello to their son Seth, 7lb 11ozs, on December 18. And congratulations to Charlotte and Mark Pennels, Drift GC, whose daughter, Isabella Georgina, 8lbs 14ozs was delivered in the early hours of February 2.

Surrey Section's golfing programme for 2010 is as follows and I am sure that you will join with me in thanking our secretary Mr William Ronald Christie for arranging such an interesting list of new and in one case stultifying venues. March 5, Gentleman's Dinner at Walton Heath GC; April 27, Spring team event at Laleham National GC; May 5; National qualifier at Burhill GC, winner of the Southern England Environmental Award; June 15, Summer tournament at Hoebridge GC; August 16, The McMillan Tankard, at Sunningdale GC; October 14; Surrey v Sussex v Essex, at Three Rivers GC Essex; November 2, England v Scotland, at Hankley Common GC, and December 7; Turkey Trot, at Guildford GC.

The Surrey Bowl knock out competition will be organised again this year by Roger Tydeman, Croham Hurst GC, and entry forms will be posted or

emailed soon.

Your committee met at Desert Springs GC, in Spain, on January 27. As an all expenses paid break the committee would like to thank you all for your generous if unknown benevolence. Just a joke, it was held as usual at Epsom GC for which we thank them for allowing us to meet there. We have a target to arrange three educational courses this year so please take a regular look at the website for updates. To encourage new young members under the age of 20 the Section will pay for their BIGGA membership in the first year. To see if you qualify refer to the Surrey Section website. The venue for our next meeting, on February 25 is a secret but flight tickets have been booked. Many thanks from your committee.

Sadly I report the sudden death of John Beaumont. John, deputy at Tyrrells Wood GC, also worked as course manager at Pырford and Hampton Court Palace GCs. We send our condolences to his family and friends.

Brian Willmott



Essex

I have plenty to report this month with our first committee meeting, a new website, plus a new arrival.

Firstly the new arrival. Congratulations go to our Chairman, Mark Stopps, and his wife, Katie, on the arrival on January 13, of Evie. She weighed in at 9lbs.3ozs, mother and baby doing well and Mark's not doing to bad either.

So due to Mark's good news, our first committee meeting was held back until January 26. I must say it was one of the best I have ever attended. It was very productive and we have some good ideas for the coming year. Watch this space.

Version 3 of our website is up and running. Though, only in a beta state, at the moment (that is, as I write this), things could well change over the next few weeks. There should be more to come about the site over the next few months. I would like to have your participation on this one though, with some mem-

bers tips and such like, I'm also looking into the possibility of a member's only section, which will require a login, this could contain a members forum and other information for members of our section only? I have to check things out with our Software Company and Internet Service Provider to see if this is possible, so I will hold this one until next month.

Golf dates at last for this season are as follows:-

South Essex. Tuesday, April 27. Smart Casual Dress. 12.30pm start time, One tee Start; Channels. Tuesday, June 22 Smart Casual Dress. 12noon start time, Two tee Start; Boyce Hill. Thursday, August 12. Jacket & Tie, Please. 12noon start time, Two tee Start. Benton Hall. Wednesday, September 29. Smart Casual Dress. 11.30am start time, Two tee Start.

Triangular Match. Thursday, October 14. Smart Casual Dress. TBA

The Essex, AGM. Team event. Wednesday December 2. Jacket & Tie, Please. 10am, Shotgun Start.

The Triangular event in October is picked from players who play consistently in our golf days throughout the season and who are available to play on the day. We are the hosts this year.

The annual Knockout competition is about to get underway, if you are interested in playing, choose your partner and sign up. The winners go to the National Championships in 2011. We have decided that whoever wins, qualifies to go to the Nationals. So if in future it's a member-trade team mix both the winners go from now on. The only stipulation we have is that there has to be at least one greenkeeper member in the team, we do not allow two trade members to play as a team. The rules will be amended and placed on our website.

The entry forms will be on their way to you all very soon, as will this year's calendar, Tom is working on it as I write this and hopefully it will be completed shortly and dispatched.

Plans are to hold an Education day out, somewhere! Paul O'Kane is working on a venue and he will be getting touch with you as soon as he has finalised the arrangements and venue. It is then planned to hold an Essex

Seminar later in the year; this is later than we first planned, as we did not want to clash with the seminar being held by the London Section in February.

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.



East Anglia

Thorpeness Golf Club – 10 December 2009

Another 10 years and a bit gone then. Doesn't time fly, then again, maybe not! Hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year – if you can remember it, you didn't.

The Annual CMW sponsored Turkey Trot took place way back in December and what a cracker (excuse the pun) it was. A full field of 120 players took part on a fantastic course on a fantastic day.

The AGM took place before the meal started – this was to prevent any 'escapees'. It nearly worked; it just meant that some stayed upstairs instead of attending the meeting downstairs. May I humbly suggest the meeting is held near the bar next time!

As usual the Chairman's report was informative, the Treasurer's report added up and the Secretary's report was short and to the point (like me). The Committee was voted in on bloc, the meeting nearly lasted 10 minutes and that included the queen's – sorry Captain's speech given by Steve Lucock, and a round of applause.

We all raced back up the stairs in two seconds flat to re-claim our beer and seats ready for our well earned and beautifully prepared Christmas dinner.

After the silly hats and whistles came the prize giving. They were many and varied so don't go to sleep just yet! The Purdis 'A' Team came first with 54.3 – second was Lemon Squeeze (sounds like a pop group) with 55.1 – third was Roy Brittain's team with 56.1 and fourth were the Thorpeness 'A' team with 56.4.

Now comes the nearest and

longest and closest:-

Nearest the Pin on: 2nd Sponsored by Aitkens, Alan Elliot; 7th Sponsored by Bartram Mowers, David Hart; 10th Sponsored by Ernest Doe, Keith Titchell; 16th Sponsored by Tomlinson Groundcare, David Chiles.

Nearest the Pin in two: 6th Sponsored by Spearhead, Peter Howard; 11th Sponsored by Spearhead – Stuart Edge

Nearest the White line: 5th Sponsored by Baileys, James Burton

Longest drive: 14th Trade – Sponsored by BIGGAE/A – Mark Keysell; 13th Guest – Sponsored by BIGGA E/A – Alan Belton

Longest drive – Greenkeepers: 0-14 H/cap Sponsored by Lely UK, Robert Whiting; 15-21 H/cap Sponsored by Lely UK, Mark Broughton; 22-28 H/cap Sponsored by Lely UK, Mark Barber

The President presented Peter Howard with Ernie Hart's port for services to Greenkeeping on Peter's retirement. Well done mate. Who was it that put holly leaves in the raffle tickets (made Ian jump anyway).

Colin, our President, read out a letter from the BBC (Big Bobby Chesham), our Vice President, which was quite emotional and we wish Bob a speedy recovery from his pruning exploits and look forward to seeing him in the New Year.

The Loo Seat was presented to Ian Willett, for winning it the most times over the years, by Brian Lindors A colourful speech followed as is fitting with a Loo Seat.

Meanwhile, back on the course, two buggies were spotted being driven by two young Greenkeepers about half an inch from a green! Please have the culprits shot before they breed.

Our thanks to the main sponsors of the day who were CMW and also to all our very loyal and generous trade members who are as follows:- Bartram Mowers, Aitkens, Ben Burgess, Tacit, Textron, John Deere, Hayter, Rigby Taylor, SISIS, Toro, Collier Turfcare, Leyley, Baileys, Sheriff and Earnest Doe.

We look forward to 2010 when we shall be at Saffron Walden, Purdis Heath, Eaton, Diss and Thorpeness.

Thanks again Thorpeness for a truly great day.

Mick Lathrope



Golf is a game steeped in tradition with a culture that is slow to change, but change it must if it is to succeed in the coming decades. We are all too well aware that gone are the days of lengthy waiting lists and golf clubs today are waking up to the fact that they need to become more commercially minded, more family orientated and more relaxed in their attitude towards dress code in the club house. Time, the state of the economy and changing lifestyles are all having an impact on the finances of clubs as more and more golfers move from club membership, adopting in many cases a policy of 'Pay and Play'.

Historically centred around greenkeeping, BIGGA is heavily reliant upon commercial revenue and now finds itself a victim of the changes in maintenance spending patterns as a consequence of diminished club budgets. 2009 was a challenge to us all, for some clubs it proved to be a better year than originally anticipated but nevertheless a year that I, for one, am glad is behind us.

What of 2010? Looking specifically at golf then I see another year of uncertainty and dwindling club memberships, another year of struggling to balance the books, another year of working harder and smarter to stand still. One of the Association's dilemmas is "How do we get all golfers to contribute towards the development and delivery of greenkeeper education in order to retain and recruit players through improved, environmentally and ecologically responsible, sports turf maintenance practices?"

Having said all of that I am delighted with the outcome of this year's Harrogate Week. We continue to get positive feedback from both exhibitors and visitors and the significant number of stands that have already been re-booked, some with increased space, is an indication of its success. The Staff Team at BIGGA HOUSE now have the job of putting together plans for January 2011 and part of the development of the Learning and Development programme will be the introduction of a one day 'High Level' conference. The absence of the major manufacturers next year will be a big blow to the financial success of the event however the Sales Team are looking at alternatives and are tasked with attracting new exhibitors that are relevant to the show. Let's also not forget that the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition (BTME) is not just about a handful of key players, it's also essential that the many dozens of small to medium sized companies, many of whom have attended year after year, are equally, if not a more essential part of the success story.

We will continue to strive to give every exhibitor, regardless of size, good value for money and I encourage you, the Members, to support those that support your Association whether at Harrogate or elsewhere throughout the year.

Finally, how are those New Year resolutions going? I am already behind with mine, the poor weather and too much time at work have put paid to the golf practise and the diet's not looking too good either. Oh well, there is still time to make amends!