

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!