

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



East

I start my report for this month with reminders of the harsh winter that we have all experienced. Certainly the worst winter that I can ever remember. On the east Lothian coastline some of the courses have been hit with what could be termed as a "mini tsunami"! Coastal erosion has lead to some golf holes being partially washed away.

Let's hope the summer makes up for it.

By the time you read this report our Spring meeting at Kilspindie GC will be history, June edition of GI will reveal all of the scores.

At the beginning of May we are running a Pest Control event (No not how to get rid of some complaining golfers), but mole trapping and vermin control over two days. This event is kindly sponsored by Mike Dooner, of Thorntree Amenity. If you are registered 1.5 credit points are awarded for event.

Our Secretary, Stuart Ferguson, is on the lookout for old SIGGA East Section memorabilia ie photographs, letters, stories, trophies .medals etc. If you have anything of interest please contact Stuart.

People on the move are David Kelly, formally my apprentice at Ratho Park and presently at Marriott Dalmahoy. who is moving on to pastures green where he will take up the new post in Holland on a new Colin Montgomerie 36 hole design complex. We wish David every success for the future.

Other people on the move are Graham Bryce, who held the position of greenkeeping lecturer at Oatridge College. Graham will be a big miss from Oatridge

College as he offered a lot of his knowledge to up and coming young greenkeepers . Graham being from a greenkeeping background who previously worked alongside Andrew Mellon at Elmwood. Graham is moving on to teach at Myerscough College. We wish him all the best.

Still with Oatridge College this lady needs no introduction to our greenkeeping Industry.

Eileen Barry is calling it a day after 28 years as Oatridge College Liaison Officer. So many success stories have come out of the greenkeeping world and a lot of this is down to Eileen's hard work and enthusiasm.

I am only one of many greenkeepers who would like to thank Eileen for the honesty, professionalism and dedication that she has shown throughout the years and wish her all the best for the future.

Tom Murray



Central

As I write this I hope we are coming to the end of one of the worst winters most of us in the industry can remember, four months of snow, ice, rain and wind have kept courses closed with little or no income making it a difficult time for everyone. The inland courses such as Crieff, Auchterarder and Gleneagles have been open for as little as 10 days since mid December, with a second fall of snow in March meaning some were still closed into April. Trees down, disease scars and ice damage have affected many courses while others, despite the snow cover, appear to have come through virtually unscathed.

It was an appropriate time for Stan Zontek and friends to give a presentation on winter damage at Elmwood on April 27

which was very well attended. The coastal courses suffered as well with exceptional storms at the end of March combining one of the highest tides of the past 50 years with strong North East winds to leave many places damaged. Crail, Kingsbarns and others all lost a piece of the coastline to the sea. or else had part of the beach washed up and deposited on a fairway along with tree trunks stones etc and similar stories can be heard from Aberdeen to the borders.

At St Andrews, a sea wall on the Eden Estuary just beyond the boundary of the Eden course was washed away flooding three holes on the Eden and three on the Strathtyrum course every time the tide came in, while the Swilcan burst its banks and sea water spilled onto the 1st green and fairway of the Old Course. Fortunately the damage appears to just be discolouration to the grass where the water sat for a period although silt deposits on the Eden fairways from the neighbouring fields may yet prove more troublesome.

Our next education evening is on May 19 at Elmwood Training Room at 6.30pm when Rex Kimberly, of Terralift, will talk on nitrogen fixing bacteria. Rex is an experienced speaker and I am sure it will be an entertaining evening as well as informative. Meanwhile Gordon McKie has started a blog on the Links trust website www.standrews.org.uk on the preparations for the Open Championship.

Main winners at the Spring outing are as follows: Best Scratch, Allan Patterson, The Castle Course - 71

Best Hcp. Dougie Barr, Caird Park - 67 nett. Section 1, Archie Dunn, Auchterarder - 68 nett Section 2, Derek Scott, Scoonie - 70 nett. Trade prize - Kenny Hunter of Fairways. Guest prize - Mike Horkan, Property Manager at St Andrews Links Full results are on the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Gordon Moir



West

The sun is shinning as I sit and write this article which makes a slight difference from the recent rain and snow, so spring has sprung eventually, and growth will be sprouting from all areas to fill in the damage caused by the snow mould attack in February/March. What a winter that was, let's hope we get a good summer to cheer everybody up for a change.

Only a couple of things to mention as March was a fairly quite month.

The West Section was recently represented at a charity event in aid Bernardo's Children's Home by our present and past Chairmen and myself playing over the Duke's Course in St Andrews but sadly we didn't live up to expectations. The course was in great condition for the time of year and the event was well organised by the students at Elmwood College. The eventual winners were Turnberry on 84 Stableford points.

Please remember that the Scottish National event to be held at Murcar will be on June 17.

A report on the spring outing at Lanark GC will be given next month, and I will include the STRI talk on wetting agents which is being held at Loch Lomond on April 20.

I would like to extend best wishes to Gordon Kerr, of Marr Hall, as his course is now ready for play and opened last month (April). The Section hopes everything went well on the day and we wish him and his staff all the best for the future.

May I also extend the Section's best wishes for the future to Denis Tweddell who started his new position as Course Man-

ager in Germany. Let's hope the language problems aren't too great and you benefited from all those night class lessons.

Brian Hillan is trying to organise football as a couple of challenges have been issued by other Sections, so those people interested should contact him on his mobile 07721610160 or on e-mail brian@hillan69.fsnet.co.uk.

Finally, a couple of items to cover, firstly, Gavin Jarvis, our Section Secretary is compiling a list of all e-mail addresses and would like as many people as possible to contact him with their details, his number is 07725363715.

The second item relates to all members news matters, please contact me for interesting items worth a mention in the magazine, weddings, births, sponsored runs etc, or anything of note contact 0141-942-5554, or 07790823914, or my e-mail st.greenkeeper@ukonline.co.uk.

Until next month
Stuart Taylor



Ayrshire

A very busy period is upon us again and with a little warmth now creeping into the ground & our old friend the rain we are sure to be kept on our toes!

I wonder how the Masters last month has affected our club members? Will their expectations still be as high after the winter we had?....Course they will! So we greenkeepers must continue to provide quality surfaces so early on in the season. Keep up the good work lads! We will get it right one day eh!

A congratulations is due to George Morrison, of Largs Kelburn GC. George and Maggie are expecting a little visit from the stork sometime in July. Won't be spending as much time on the old Land Rover now, George! We wish you both and your little bundle of joy all the best when the time comes.

Remember guys this is your Section news, So any news, Any goss, Anything you would like to be seen in the mag let me know.

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North

Where do I start this month? The weather is up to its old tricks again. While I was sunning myself in Tenerife with the family the snow decided to make a return in the Easter holidays. Shame. It didn't last too long though and it was only here for a day. I think though further North it was still hanging around a couple of weeks later.

Hopefully your season is under way, I'm sure many of you are still putting the final touches to your Winter programmes. I know next door at Royal Aberdeen they have been very busy. They have added another eight bunkers to their course (as if it's not difficult enough!) and they have extended the blue tee at the 4th to a 464 yard par-4. If you don't already know they are holding the Walker Cup next year and these improvements are for this competition. I'm sure there will be further alterations before the tournament begins.

Richard Mullen, of Meldrum House GC, is a proud new dad again. His wife gave birth to another girl, Cara, who was born on April 2 weighing in at 8lbs 1oz. Congratulations and we hope both mother and baby are doing well.

Richard 'Dicky' Pirie, my old work mate at Newmachar, has become a granda for the first time. His daughter, Debbie, gave birth to baby, Chloe, weighing in at 7lbs 2oz. She must be nearly as big as you mate. Hope they're doing well and I'm sure you'll soon be called on for some babysitting duties.

Also at Newmachar the Head Mechanic, Sandy Gammack, has been in hospital recently and just to let you know that all your friends and work colleagues are thinking of you. Hopefully you'll have plenty of banter with the hospital staff and I'm sure you'll have a garage set up in the car park ready to fix their cars!

There is a new man in charge at Letham Grange. Keith Law has been placed in charge on a trial basis. Hopefully this goes well for you, Keith, and good luck with all your efforts in keeping Letham a great course to visit and play.

In next month's issue I shall have all the runners and riders

and who won what at Deeside GC.

That's all for this month guys, as usual if you do have any news give me a shout on 07813889374.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links

Northern Region



Northern

Hello everyone hope you are all well. The committee are sorry to say we had to cancel the Spring Seminar, due to a poor response from the membership and one of the speakers was unexpectedly taken ill. I am, however, pleased to report he is now making a full recovery. A big thanks to all who did expressed an interest in the seminar, hopefully we will be able to reorganise it at a later date. The date & time has been set for our Autumn golf tournament & AGM, September 29, first tee 10 am. Sorry there is no more news, I hope by the time you are reading this I will have seen lots of you at the spring golf tournament. If you have any news or gossip PLEASE pass it on to me, Frank Stewart, 72 West Park Grove, Roundhay, Leeds, LS8 2DY. Phone 07947 401278

Frank Stewart



North Wales

This time of year we can look forward to the grass flushing more than the toilet at an continents' convention, but at least now is the time to bang in some overtime to bring us up-to-date with the Bank Manager after such a savings draining winter.

We now have a facebook group called "North Wales B.I.G.G.A" so if you're on facebook you can find Section events listed there and also space to chat to other group members.

I hope everyone who went to Caernarfon Golf Club for the Spring tournament enjoyed themselves, at time of going to print, I'm afraid I cannot give any write up about the day

until next month but there will be results and if I remember to take the camera, pictures on our new facebook group. Likewise hopefully you will be able to see pictures of the CONNECT days that took place at Conwy Golf Club recently.

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North East

Well what news do we have his month as usual the phone hasn't stopped ringing with info! I think not. But, surprise surprise, I do have some news. Looks like there's going to be lots of movement around the Section as Close House, Hexham and Matfen Hall have all been advertising for staff.

Right, here goes. David Thompson, who has worked at Matfen for the last eight years has taken over from Michael McKenna at Hexham. As you all know Michael has gone up to Loch Lomond. James Leighton, who has been working at the prestigious Wentworth GC for the last 18 months, has started at Close House. Kevin Wright, who was at Slaley, has also moved to Close House as well and I believe that a Mr J. Saunders, who worked at Gosforth GC, has moved to Matfen Hall. Let's hope that's the last of moves for a while. I recently heard that the Priestman course at Slaley Hall is going to be altering all of its bunkers in the next few weeks or I should say months, the way weather has been. I hope that it picks up pretty damn quick as I thought we have had a bad winter but with Slaley being a lot higher they had their fair share of snow.

Another bit of news recently read about was that The Northumberland GC has been chosen to hold the regional qualifying for The Open in 2013. I know it seems along way off but doesn't time fly these days. So well done to Head Greenkeeper, Gordon Proudlock, and his staff they must be doing something right as not every golf club get that chance to host a qualifier for The Open.

And last, but not least, I was talking to Steve Pope and he was showing me a magazine that he

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still had way back in 1984. My God how has that changed over the years, seeing is believing. Anyway we were reminiscence on all the Regional and National competitions there were in those days no doubt only the older greenkeepers will remember them lets see if any other members and Sections can here goes Marshall Concessionaires, Iseki, Hayter, Jacobsen, Kubota Golf Challenge and the Ransome International which was played as The National Greenkeepers Competition, plus over three years on a point basis so the top three players would represent England against other countries around the world. Sadly we don't have anymore competitions like that these days but I suppose it's down to money. All I can say on that matter thanks to all those Jimmy Richardson



North West

So then Easter has come and gone and we here in the North West have just had our first tournament, obviously, I'm writing this in advance so let's just say thanks to all the new faces at the event it was great to see it well supported. Unfortunately, I couldn't attend as I had already booked a round at Turnberry, which couldn't be cancelled.

I am writing this at the beginning of April, the 8th to be exact. I've just returned home from the Northern Region Seminar at Penrith Golf Club, the topic being "The next decade". Peter Larter had put together a great programme of speakers. The morning started with Tracey Maddison talking about how CPD was developing and how BIGGA was advancing with relationships with GCMA and the PGA, to name but two, following Tracey was Laurence Pithie, (who I remember getting his MGC when I was a young 16yr old at Cannington College, (he's aged better than me)). Laurence talked about getting the basics right when it comes to greenkeeping, I had brought along my Deputy, Sec/Manager and Greens Convener to the event, the latter being very impressed with Laurence, hopefully in the not too distant future

we will have some of Laurence's workshops in the NW. Richard Minton followed next talking about the sustainable use of Pesticides, there were many thought provoking comments about current and future legislations. After lunch Bob Taylor, from the STRI, talked about developing a competitive, the amount of information that man can get across in 45 minutes is unbelievable - topics ranged from rough to trees, from ponds to dead-wood and from sustainability master planning to Hemi-views, all very interesting and I for one will be contacting Bob in the near future to Hemi-view Hesketh or something like that. The final speaker of the day was Tim Lobb, from Thompson Perritt and Lobb Golf Design, Tim gave a detailed insight on the workings of golf course architecture past and present. While not just talking about his own company Tim showed how an architect goes about tackling golf course changes taking into consideration all the factors affected by the redesign, again another very interesting talk ending a very good day, the four of us travelling the 80 miles back to Hesketh had plenty to talk about and all found the day worthwhile. Again thanks to Peter for setting up the seminar and also the setting at Penrith was excellent, the course looked great and the cleaner who ordered our Bacon rolls early in the morning was a star. Och well, I've probably talked too much now, hope all goes well for the coming month...

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Cleveland

Hi all, not got much news to report this time around. Hope you are all well and rearing to go for this season.

On Thursday, February 25 at Teesside Golf Club, Baz and Ally held their annual quiz. The night was great success and was well put together as always. Thanks to Baz and Ally for their hard work.

Congratulations to Phil Hargrave and his wife, Suzanne on

the arrival of their son, Finlay, on Sunday, April 4. Many sleepless nights for you now, Phil.

Congratulations to Richard Pybus, at Blackwell, who has been promoted to Deputy Head Greenkeeper. James Parker, also from Blackwell, has been invited to join the BIGGA Support team this year for The Open at St Andrews. This follows working at the BMW PGA Championship and the European Open last year 2009, well done to you both.

Our spring tournament was held at Seaton Carew Golf Club on March 23. The event was very well attended and the main sponsor of the day was Lloyd of Bishop Auckland, represented by Alistair Whitby, so thanks for your continual support. Other sponsors included, in no particular order, Boxer Chemicals, Tacit, Turfcare and Northern Lubricants.

Results. Category 1. 1. Ian Stuart, 41pts; 2. Dave Cuthbertson, 35pts; 3. Danny Simpson, 35 pts on countback. Category 2. 1. John Talbot, 35pts; 2. Ian Holoran, 34pts; 3. James Parker 34pts, on countback. Category 3. 1. Ian "The Bandit" Pemberton, 35pts; 2. Kev Scarce, no points because I had to retire due to an extremely serious thumb injury.

A ball hit hit me on the thumb and needless to say I received zero sympathy for my wound. Anyway on with the rest of the prizes, Nearest the pin was won by Gary Frazer, Longest Drive Ian Stewart, best par 3s Ian Stewart, and finally best par 5s was won by Danny Simpson.

All in all it was a great day and was well attended. Thanks to Head Greenkeeper, Tony, and his staff the course was in great condition, and a big thank you to Seaton Carew Golf Club for having us on the course and a big thanks to the catering staff and clubhouse staff for a nice meal and making us all feel very welcome. The day was also attended by Peter Larter, BIGGA Regional Administrator and Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership Services. It was nice to have you both.

Thanks also to Ian Pemberton for once again organising the golf day and organising the prizes.

Final congratulations must go to Newcastle United FC on their promotion back to the Premier League, they can now enjoy a short stay back in the top league with the big clubs such as Sun-

derland!

P.S I'm not a Sunderland fan. Any news, or verbal abuse after the last section, kevscarce@aol.com or 07921817857



Sheffield

I hope everyone is now finally settling into the new season and that we are all working in glorious sunshine.

Unfortunately we had to cancel our Grinding/Workshop management day due to lack of interest. I must apologise to those who wanted to attend and we shall be trying to reorganise the day later on in the year. Thanks to Golf and Turf Machinery for their help trying to organise this day.

Our first Golf match of the season will be upon us shortly hopefully you will all have received your invitations and will be dusting the clubs off. You will all be receiving Our 2010 fixture card soon but hear is a list of the competitions and venues for the year.

Annual Competition- Hillsborough GC, July 7. Autumn Competition- Silkstone GC September 13. Sheffield vs Northern match- Wooley Park, July 14. Christmas Competition- Lindrick GC, November 29.

It would be nice to see as many of you as possible at these competitions. I must also remind everyone that we must adhere to the dress code at all our events the dress code will be on the invitation to all events.

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Midland Region



East Midlands

Hi everyone, I hope you are all enjoying the warming weather. I am happy to report that we have some news for the East Midlands Section. There is a PGA Seniors Tour event to be held at

Stapleford Park on May 12, 13 and 14. Matthew Edge is looking for volunteers to help prepare the course. There will be many of the old favourites playing so will be a good experience for all who attend. If you are interested in helping Matthew out, then please contact him on 07989 356 145. Everyone by now should have their pair's fixtures; it is shaping up to be a good year this year with some new courses in the competition. Once again if anybody has any news then please contact either myself or Andy de Wet.

Matthew Wormald



Midland

Firstly this month I would like to apologise for the lack of notes for both February and March of this year, such was composed and emailed to H.Q. but unfortunately they did not receive such, for some unfathomable reason! "It's only milk". However, there is, of course, the cream that our Section is so reliant upon, such being the kind sponsorship of our many golf and educational events, and of course our wonderful calendar. My greatest apologies must go to those kind calendar page sponsors who were featured in the missed publications. Such being: January's page, Abbey Mowers, please consider them for your machinery needs, especially regarding Toro products www.abbeymowers.co.uk. February's page, Turner Groundscare, also for your machinery requirements, particularly John Deere machines www.turnergroundscare.co.uk. And March's page, Matt Gresty/Professional Amenity Grass Seed (specialist). Please email Matt for all of your seed requirements on matthew.gresty@limagrains.co.uk. For those interested in the two missing back instalments, such can be found on our Section's website; www.biggamidlandsection.com.

Our fixtures for the fore coming season are; Spring: Trentham Golf Club, May 17 (late entries will be accepted due to the above cited, please call Gary: 07780-953-764 to book your place). Summer: Edgbas-

ton Golf Club, July 19. Autumn: Beau Desert Golf Club, October 7. Christmas: Woburn Golf Club, December 2. Our thanks to these most generous Clubs for affording us such opportunity to play what can only be described as four delicious venues straight out of the top draw. Also thanks to Rhys for yet again instigating and organising such. With such wonderful courses on offer I hope that you will support our Section by attending these both enjoyable and networking educational days with the added bonus of maybe wining one of the many great prizes on offer as provided by our many generous sponsors. Talking of sponsors, our thanks to Burrows Grass Machinery for this month's calendar page. For your Ransomes and Jacobsen sales, service and spares please call: 0870-242-6952.

It is with great happiness that I can report that two of our members have had a visit from the old stork, and I don't mean margarine.

Firstly, Mark Cutler, of Edgbaston, and his lovely wife, Sara, with a bouncing baby girl, Lucy. Well there goes your golf, Mark. Secondly, our Chair, Ed Stant, and his ever suffering wife, Tracey, (sorry I got it wrong last time lass) have had a big lipped (not my words) crackling girl, Jemima. Ed you look nothing like Jagger, your belly's too big for a start, and as it's your second your golf is already out of the window (is that the round one!). Seriously though, welcome to the world, Lucy and Jemima, and congratulations to their proud parents.

And finally, just time to remind all to get their entries for this year's Scotts Doubles Knockout Competition in by the spring tournament, where the draw will as usual be conducted. I do suspect that us mere mortals will stand a greater chance this year as the dynamic partnership that has almost dominated this event for many years has been forced to split. So please get your entries in and support this long running popular event. With the final being the wonderful prize of playing at Wentworth and as a guest of our fine sponsors for the day by Scots such is surely £6 well invested

Sorry for reiteration,
Sean McDade.

South West and South Wales Region



South Coast

To begin with I have to mention that South Coast Section Spring Comp is fast approaching and that the info will be sent to all Section members very soon. Just a reminder that the winners on the day gain automatic entry to the National Championship, sponsored by Kubota and Charterhouse Redexim, later in the year.

The venue is the beautiful and picturesque Bramshaw GC, on Thursday May 13, (I'm sure Jason and his team are looking forward to it!). We will be playing 9 holes on the challenging Forest course before lunch; then 18 holes on the Manor followed by dinner and presentation, the price yet to be confirmed will be around the £22 mark. I'm hoping we manage to get the excellent support we had at the Turkey Trot.

With no other news to pass on, if your ready for your sleep at tea break then continue reading as I'm going to tell you a bit about life at Brockenhurst Manor during this seemingly endless winter.

After the continuous rain of November, the freezing temperatures and ice of December, and the snow in January, it gave me a chance to embark (excuse the pun) on our much needed Woodland Management programme, although the majority of the work is hopefully going to be carried out by tree specialists, John Nicholson Associates. We have spent many frozen hours clearing around greens and tees to improve air circulation and sunlight, the feedback from members has been encouraging, especially as we now have some stunning views of the New Forest, while standing on some tees instead of the previous walls of holly and very little light.

I did manage to unintentionally find a way to get the green staff back into shape after the festive period, when we had a rogue herd of new forest ponies

demolishing my garden fence and roaming around the golf course to seek pastures new. The horses must of thought it was Christmas...well it was! So with the help of some of members we did eventually manage to turn them out in the torrential rain, but at the expense of some serious damage to the greens and some tired and fed up green staff.

On a personal note. I attended a two day presentation skills workshop at BTME, I had the pleasure of the company of the then BIGGA Chairman elect-Paul Worster; Stuart, from St Annes Old Links, and Alec, from Newbury/Crookham. We spent a lot the time learning and putting together presentations and we found out a bit about each other through them. Sorry guys you had to listen to me talk about the famous Rams (Derby County FC) for five minutes. Oh yeah, Mr Chairman, I will get my revenge on you one day...you know what I mean eh! Joking aside best wishes during your time in office, Paul.

Back at BMGC due to more heavy rain this week our Maintenance Week has been cancelled.. more headaches....I'm sure things will improve soon and by the time your reading this it will be too warm for us and the grass will be going mad. I wish you all a great season ahead.

Kevan Glass



South Wales

Hope you are all well.

I will start off by bringing you a report on two recent evening events that were organised by our Section and the South Wales branch of the IOG.

First was a trip to The Swalec Stadium for the rearranged talk by Keith Exton, Head Groundsman at the ground. Keith gave a very good presentation entitled 'In at the deep end' on the work carried out at the ground in preparation for the Ashes test. There then followed a Q&A session with some searching questions from the attendees, then guests were treated to a lovely buffet. Thanks to Keith for his excellent presentation, to the South Wales IOG for organising

the rearranged event, to everybody (about 20) who turned up and to Peter Holstrom and Countrywide for sponsoring the event.

Next was the visit to Ffos Las Racecourse, where about 30 people braved the inclement weather to enjoy an interesting evening in the company of Mr Tim Long, Clerk Of The Course, who gave us an informative guided tour of the course and all its state-of-the-art facilities. A great evening was rounded off with a powerpoint presentation on the construction of the course and then a nice buffet! Thanks again to the IOG and Countrywide for their organisation and support for this event and to Tim and Alwyn Morgan, Head Groundsman, and everyone at Ffos Las for their hospitality.

The Section's first golf day of the year will take place at Trefloyne GC on Friday, May 21, and is once again sponsored by Tower Sport Europe, so thanks in advance to them for their continued support. Tee off is at 1.30pm. The schedule for the day will be different this year in that there will be a running buffet so you don't have to wait a long time for your meal if you happen to be one of the first out. Also there will be a 'smart casual' dress code. So if you have been asking for these changes in routine then please support the idea with your presence! It's up to you!

Also, this event has been scheduled for a Friday, so that it could be turned into a social event with people having a night out in Tenby with the possibility of discounted accommodation at Trefloyne. You are more than welcome to bring your loved one too if you wish (or failing that, the wife!) Again, it sounds like a great idea, but needs participation. So if you are interested then please give Steve Chappell a ring.

That's it for this month! By the time you've read this then hopefully either Cardiff City or the Swans will be in The Premiership, and some of their fans, if they meet in the play-offs, will not be in jail! The mighty Scarlets, however, will be out of the Heineken Cup for next season and will instead be playing some 'pop and crisps' cup! Never mind, at least (after a recent visit to The Liberty Stadium) our fans can sing and are not too busy eating prawn sandwiches!

Anyway, here's to an enjoyable and stress free growing season for you all!

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Devon and Cornwall

March's Meeting at Mullion Golf Course down on the Lizard peninsula was a great success. 40 members made the trip to Mullion, which for many was a long trip. It was worth every mile though, as Gordon Tamblyn, Course Manager, had the course in superb condition. On a dry but windy day (apparently just a breeze for Mullion) the course played extremely well and the views from the bottom holes were outstanding. 25 members joined Gordon on an extremely interesting Course Walk. We all met back at the very friendly and accommodating Clubhouse for what was a very welcome lunch. The Carvery and desert was plentiful, leaving 40 very satisfied customers. After lunch, Brian Robinson, Rigby Taylor, Director of Grass Seed Research, gave a fascinating and in-depth insight into grass seed research and in what direction the industry is being lead. Enthesis was placed on reducing inputs and improving carbon footprints and how it will play a huge part in the future management of amenity areas. Many thanks to Brian for making the long trip and for giving such an enthusiastic and thought provoking presentation.

The Golf format for the day was individual Stableford with prizes sponsored by Bayer. In first place was Mike Ellis, Lake View GC, with 35 pts, second was Andrew Dunstan, Newquay GC, with 32 pts and third was Tim Ellis, Mullion GC, with 31 pts. There were 2x Longest drives and 2x Nearest the pin. One set sponsored by Farmura and the other very kindly sponsored by Gordon Tamblyn, Mullion GC. Longest drive on the 4th and Nearest the pin on the 16th was won by Keith Kemp (West Cornwall), Nearest the pin on the 11th was won by Des Bickle (Bigbury) and Longest drive on the 18th was won by Shaun

Warren (Staddon Heights). Well done to all and many thanks to all the sponsors.

The next meeting for us will be the "Devon v Cornwall" Match on the 15th June at St Mellion International. More details to follow.

Good luck to everyone for the season.

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South West

Hello everyone, I trust you're all well. I'm sure you'll all agree when I say how great the weather has been the last week or so... (I do hope it remains while you read this) After the winter we had, this weather is the least we deserve, if you ask me a little bit of the Caribbean sun would be just fine.

As with most of you, I'm sure, we've just started to spread a little bit of the magic stuff to help everything grow, this always seems like a pretty good idea at the time only to realise we have a four day weekend just around the corner. Mind you it'll still be there on the Tuesday so, I do hope you all have/had an enjoyable Easter bank holiday!

Just recently I received a very nice e-mail from Ian Hugglestone. Ian been an Associate Member with BIGGA for four years now, and comments on the great times he's had during this time. Last year Ian took a break from work. However this summer he would like to offer his services and maybe help out on a golf course with you (this would be within the Bristol area). With such a busy time of year coming up, I'm sure some of you may need every little help you can get on the golf course. Please contact me if you may have an interest in his services.

I'll be honest with you this month people, I am a little short of things to write about (this is where I ask for your thoughts/stories or even a little light banter that you may like to share with us).

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South East Region



Kent

As life slowly returns to our courses after the longest winter ever an increasingly smile seems to be re-appearing on the faces of Course Managers I meet, who are all relieved to be out there cutting grass again.

It's amazing the difference 12 months can make. In previous years my watering system was being used on a regular basis at this time as the summer season began. This year has seen a return to more traditional seasonal weather pattern forcing the retreat of the global warming brigade and their preachings of doom and gloom. There's always a bright side eh!

Not much to tell you about this month. By the time you read this we would probably have played our National qualifying tournament at Wildernesse on May 6. Full report on all the day's events to appear in this column next month.

I would like to thank Neil Metcalf, and his team at Royal St. George's, for his hospitality a couple of weeks ago when a group of us were given the privilege of the freedom of his immaculate course. Neil's chat with us beforehand (despite the noise from the skip lorry!) was a great insight into what goes into maintaining such a prestigious venue. Even though we only had a walk round the course, the incredible level of difficulty players face from the back tees was off the scale. Thanks also to Glenn Kirby for his efforts in organising the day.

Like I said, just a short one this month but please check our webpage now it is being updated regularly. We have now added a forum, which I would really appreciate your comments, stories, experiences etc. on.

Back to cutting grass now.

Best of British

Rob Holland

www.kentgreenkeepers.com



Surrey

May 6, its official, by now you could have voted for my new political party 'BALLS' and given me a retirement present that will keep me in luxury for many years to come. My Political Manager, wee Dougie, has assured me that his recent fact finding mission to Trinidad was two weeks of non stop hard work and should we win he has chosen his and my beach-side second home in a convenient position only 12 hours from Westminster. Please remember our slogan 'You play ball with us and we'll supply the referee'.

Darcey Eve Rowe will be almost four months old this month and wondering why your's truly did not mention her birth, 7lb 13ozs, on January 16 in an earlier edition. My excuse is that the information given to me by daddy Gary, Banstead Downs GC, was put in the wrong pocket and was retrieved only just before the offending piece of clothing visited the washing machine. Apologies to mummy Elaine, baby Darcey, and daddy, Gary. Had I left this news any longer Darcey could have read the paragraph all by herself.

My first kick boxing bout went well and that the cut to my forehead is healing well. My opponent was not so lucky as the cuts she received cannot be repaired and her tights were a complete right off. Sorry, of course, I don't mean that her tights came off, I mean, oh you know what I mean. What I really mean is don't trip and head butt a window frame it hurts.

Still, no holidays booked and few ideas so please when I next call have some holiday destinations ready for my perusal and a subscription to 'BALLS' the party that looks after number one.

Brian Willmott



Essex

By the time you get to read this, the first of our golf days will

be over. Well done to the winners and I hope you all enjoyed the day at South Essex Golf Club. Results will be posted next month.

I mentioned last month that I would be giving you a full list of our sponsors for the 2010 season, the underlined are the new sponsors who have joined us this year they are as follows:-

Advantage-Environmental; Billericay Farm Services; BMS; Chaingreen Ltd (Sea Nymph); Old Forge Mowers; Avoncrop Amenity Products; Bailey's of Norfolk; Banks Amenity Products; Blade Amenity; CMW Equipment Ltd; Collier Turf Care; Ernest Doe & Sons; Fieldfare Amenity; GM Amenity; Golf Mats UK; Grasshopper (Horticultural) Ltd; Headland Amenity Products; Limagrain UK; Prime Irrigation Ltd; Rain-bird Europe; Rigby Taylor Ltd; Scotts Professional; Tey Farm Systems; P, Tuckwell Ltd and Writtle College. All their contact details are on our website. We welcome them all to our Section and thank them for their support.

I hope you all like the new look website?

It would be nice to have any constructive comments on the site, as it is there for your information and not just for me to play with in my free moments.

Our next golf day is Tuesday, June 22, at Channels Golf Club there is a new format for the day and a Bar-B-Q afterwards. It should be fun so put it on your list of things to do, £15 entry fee, which is real good, value for a day's golf and the meal after. We all look forward to seeing you there.

April 27 Spring Trophy at South Essex GC; June 22, Summer Trophy at Channels GC; July 13, Essex Greenkeepers v Captains of Essex at Romford GC (Invitation); July 20, The Tuckwell Golf Team Championship at Bentley GC. (Invitation); August 12, Essex Trophy at Boyce Hill GC; September 29 Autumn Trophy at Benton Hall Golf & Country Club; October 14, The Doe's Triangular, Essex/ Sussex/Surrey at Three Rivers Golf & Country Club (Invitation); December 2 AGM and Team Event at The Essex Golf & Country Club

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Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer & Webmaster



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

By the time you read this we should have launched the updated and much improved BIGGA website that incorporates many new features including a payment gateway, a calendar of local and national events, an improved Classified Adverts section and improved log-on security. Take time to explore the site and take advantage of the wealth of information that is available, all designed to help keep you in touch with the industry, improve your knowledge base or do your job more effectively.

One of the next measures that is currently being investigated is a web based Continuing Professional Development (CPD) software package that will enable Members to manage key elements of their CPD registration and, hopefully, the Membership Database. CPD is an important part of career development and we live in a world where qualifications are an essential building block towards that next job.

One of the Association's objectives is to raise professional standards through education and Members need to take on board the fact that experience alone will not be sufficient in the future. If you have not registered with Sami or Rachael at HQ for CPD then I ask "Why not?". More and more it will become a dominant feature of a great many career opportunities and the Association is looking at the feasibility of incorporating CPD into its membership structure.

If you are unsure of what CPD is or how it can help you progress then I suggest that you take a look at the following web site which is part of the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development: www.cipd.co.uk/cpd/aboutcpd/whaticpd.htm

I continue to be amazed at the total apathy that some people seem to demonstrate and wonder to what they aspire. Many are often quick to be critical of the success of others or complain that life has dealt them a poor hand of cards but rarely do they do something about helping themselves. It's true that we cannot all achieve that top job but we can all do better, we can all raise our self-esteem and confidence through learning. The golf industry is going through some very testing times and I think that the economy in general is far from close to picking itself up off the floor. A General Election this month will, in my opinion, only add to the country's problems with no clear and effective outcome. For all our sakes I hope I am proven to be wrong.

On a more positive note I am pleased to announce that Rigby Taylor have offered to sponsor a Hole-in-One prize of a car at this year's National Championship, sponsored by Kubota and Charterhouse Turf Machinery, in October.

If you want more details of the event then contact Sandra at HQ but be warned that available places are going quickly.

We have now completed three quarters of our new financial year and I am pleased to report that we are ahead of budget and should end the year with a small surplus, a very different result to the one that we anticipated. This has been achieved through a combination of careful control of expenditure and improved revenue. We are now working on the budgets for 2010/11 which will be a more problematic year.

Finally I would like to wish Kirstin at HQ and her husband, Andy, many, many years of happiness together following their marriage on April 23rd.