

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

We had a great turnout for the presentation by Andy Russell, of Headland, on a wet evening on February 23 when we were competing against Champions League football on the TV. Those present certainly went away with some food for thought on how to prepare their fine turf areas heading into the winter.

The presentation by Lynn Jopling, of SGEg, which had to be cancelled for snow was rearranged for February 8 and we had a creditable 16 members along for that, which was also good considering some people who would likely have attended were away at the GIS, in Orlando. Sincere thanks to both Lynn and Andy for taking the time to come and share their knowledge with us.

The Spring outing will be held on April 28, at Ladybank, this year and entry forms should be with you by the time you read this. Numbers are limited to 32 players therefore please return your entry form promptly.

The Section Committee has decided to make some important changes to how it organises and runs the outings and other events from now on with most correspondence being by email, therefore to make sure you don't miss out, please contact us with your email address and remember to let us know if it changes. There will also be an entry form available on our website, www.biggacentralsection.co.uk Entries must be paid up front in full and returned with the entry form or you can pay by BACS bank transfer if you prefer and follow the correct instructions,

which are explained on the entry form. We will not accept entries after the closing date or on the day. The draw will appear on the website on April 22.

We also intend running a Pairs' Competition through the season. You should also have been sent an email with an entry form and details of this and again, the information and rules of the competition are on the website.

At the time of writing, we hope that Stan Zontek will give a presentation at the Elmwood Training Room in mid to late April on the changes made to the Congressional GC, in Washington DC, in preparation for the US Open.

Finally, two points from the February edition which was unfortunately didn't appear in the magazine. Belated congratulations to Jon Wood, and his partner, Elle Livanovo, on the birth of their son, Philip Ivan. Jon is the Deputy Course Manager on the Old Course. Someone on the move is Tommy McFadden, who has left St Andrews Links to take up a position as a Deputy Course Manager in Germany.

Gordon Moir



West

Sunshine and showers are the order of the day with some fine temperatures for this time of year, long may it continue. Our course looks rather good and dry for a change, but not for long I dare say, only the disease scars creating a blight on the horizon. Congratulations to Brian Bolland and the staff at East Kilbride Golf Club for having the course in excellent condition recently, coming through the winter with no disease scars (my home club folks).

Not too much to report on recently, only the Annual Conference at Dunfermline on March 1.

As usual the venue was first class, with Janice and her staff coping extremely well with all the problems created by impressive numbers of 200. The meal was excellent and the dining staff, headed by Reefa, had us in and out in no time. Congratulations on an superb spread.

The guest speakers of: Simon Watson, Sygenta; Chris Kennedy, Wentworth; Jonathan Harmer, Farmura; Jim Mackenzie, Celtic Manor; Clive Nottingham, Lloyds, and, finally, Chris Haspell, Castle Stuart, all gave excellent talks and had the audience captivated with the different aspects of their talks. Sorry to Chris Haspell for the Skibo Castle call but nerves did play a small part.

Thanks to Sami, from Headquarters, turning up to assist and the National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, that was much appreciated.

Finally, thanks to Peter Boyd without whom the whole thing just wouldn't happen. Once again you have excelled yourself.

All your hard work and organisation was well worth it and I'm sure you will be rewarded in heaven.

On a personal note I appreciate everything you did for the day and the Association.

A couple of things to mention for the coming months - Spring Outing, at Cowglen GC, on May 19; the Scottish National at Duke's Course, in St Andrews, on June 15, and the Autumn outing at Williamwood GC, on September 15.

Unfortunately, nobody has been in touch about news items but if you have something interesting to mention contact me on stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com or mobile 07790823914, or my landline is 0141-942-5554.

Stuart Taylor.



North

I start this month's news with the fact that Bryan Beaton, formerly of Craibstone Golf Centre in Aberdeen, has left to take up the post of Deputy Head at Inverurie Golf Club. He has joined up with Brian Williams who is the Head Greenkeeper there. Good luck Bryan and I hope you enjoy your time there.

The Section would like to thank Gary Smith, of Scotts, and Wilson Morrison, of Fairways, for their continued support with sponsoring of the 200 Club cards.

Robert Hardie, who runs the 200 Club, has asked me to mention that if you can return payment for your cards asap as this will then determine how many cards we have left to sell to the other members and friends. The price of the card, which includes the chance to win £100 each draw, is still £7 which, I think, is great value. There are other tickets available and if you feel you could maybe sell another one to a family member then please get in contact with Robert himself on 07590775957.

The Secretary, Dale Robertson, has asked me to put out a change of date for the Spring outing at Montrose Links. Originally it was to be held on May 19 but we have been shifted forward a week and it will now be on the Thursday, May 26. Forms for the day will be out soon and if you could get them back to Dale asap and remember you could always take a guest along, just to see what we're all about. They don't even have to be a member to come along.

Dunfermline has been and gone for another year. The best yet, by all accounts, with some 200 delegates attending. Once

Around The Green

again full credit to Peter Boyd. Year after year it gets more popular and with the hard work that Peter puts in, the rewards are very satisfying.

Thanks also to the many Section members who made the journey. Some took the car, some took the bus and some even took the sleeper! Remember attending events like these all count towards the Patrons' Award and the chance to attend BTME 2012.

One final piece of information, Dale Robertson, Course Manager at Newmachar, is looking at putting staff through their PA2, Tractor mounted spraying course. Anyone wanting to put staff through the course should contact Dale on 01651 863002 EXT 04. If you speak to Dale then you could maybe come to some arrangement and book the relevant course.

That's it for this month so if you do have any news just give me a shout on 07813889374.

Happy Greenkeeping

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links



Ayrshire

Hello again.

Another month has passed us by quicker than ever! Just when I put the pen and paper away it's time to bring it all back out again and write another report for all you budding greenkeepers out there!

Talking about time passing us by, it has been one year since our good old friend Denis Tweddell left Ayrshire to take up his new post as Head Greenkeeper, in Germany, (he's still there!) I heard from him just last week and all going well abroad, I did remind him that we are still waiting to hold one of our outings over there.....watch this space

I'm sure everyone has their work all carried out for the season ahead and now looking forward to getting back to cutting and that good old smell of cut grass? I can't wait! We wouldn't have it any other way, would we?

The Scottish Conference at Dunfermline was held on Tuesday, March 1, with again

another record turn out. All credit to Peter Boyd for bringing together some of the best speakers we have linked to our profession - another informative day for everyone involved.

My sources tell me the lunch refreshments were good as usual and that a certain Iain Barr enjoyed two helpings from the cake trolley - cheesecake, I heard! I just hope there was still some left for George, Iain! Thanks to all the Ayrshire boys that made the short trip up to the Conference, every little helps! I'm sure I've heard that somewhere before?

The Ayrshire Outing is upon us and is to be held over Prestwick St Cuthberts on Tuesday, April 26. I'm hoping to get a wee cheeky day off work, dust off the clubs and put in a decent score to take to the Autumn outing to be held at Turnberry Resort on October 4. Look forward to seeing you all there.

As stated in every report I issue if anyone has anything they would like to be mentioned in the mag or just something they would like off their chest then get in touch!

That's it for another month.

Cheers.

John Mair.

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Johnmair982@hotmail.co.uk

Northern Region



Northern

Hello everyone hope you are all well and ready for a new golf season. By the time you read this article you will all have received a copy of the new Northern Section fixture list for the coming season. I think you will agree we have some top courses to play. At BTME in 2012 there is going to be an exhibition, "100 years of Greenkeeping Associations", Peter Larter has asked if anyone has any old photos, magazines or diaries, to please get in touch with him or the Section. Hopefully now the days are getting longer and warmer we can all start thinking about starting our spring programme of works. Sorry there is no news or gossip

this month, if you have any please forward it on to me, and I hope to see you at our golf events during the season. As usual please contact me: Frank Stewart, 72 West Park Grove, Roundhay, LS8 2DY. Mob 07947401278, email frankstewart3@hotmail.co.uk.

Frank Stewart



North East

Well surprise surprise I have had some news sent in to me via e-mail, this is from Michael McKenna, formerly of Slaley Hall, Matfen Hall, Hexham and, lastly, Loch Lomond. After working at Loch Lomond as a seasonal last year he met an American Intern called Seth Rainer who worked at the world famous Scioto Country Club in Columbus-Ohio. The course where a young Jack Nicklaus learned the game of golf, Seth had come to the Loch through the Ohio State International Intern programme led by Program Manager, Michael O'Keefe.

After spending the summer working and studying with Seth he realised the level of knowledge and expertise he had gained attending the Ohio State University and working closely with Bob Becker, at Scioto CC, was at a high level. After seeking advice from David Cole, Superintendent at Loch Lomond GC, he decided to contact Mike O'Keefe and look at the possibility of enlisting on the Ohio State University International Intern programme.

That was back in November 2010, now he has been granted a Visa to complete a year of on training in the USA starting, of course, at Scioto CC for the first six months which will also include working at the US Tour Memorial Tournament at Muirfield Village GC Dublin, Ohio. While he is there he is looking forward to learning from Superintendents and colleagues in the States and also attending seminars at the University.

Having received my list of membership I decided to have a good look at it and came up with some strange figures. As I have mentioned many times lately

on how the lack of members we see at golf events in recent years, well I am not surprised. Out of all our members only 23 people had played at sometime. Now take out some of those who had played once upon a time and we are left with a very small band of golfers.

Now for some more stats.

We have five retired members; 11 from various companies, four at college; 11 student members; nine members who are in the wrong Section; six Course Managers; 19 Head Greenkeepers; eight Deputies; six First Assistants; 30 over 21s; four Assistants under 21. Sounds like we have a large membership, doesn't it?

But no, we do not, there are a lot of non members out there I am not going to mention this month on what courses have no members at all leave that for later.

And finally the following dates for competitions. This year so far are Spring at Newcastle Utd GC, April 15, and Autumn at Longhirst Hall GC, September 21.

I look forward to seeing some new and old faces.

Jimmy Richardson



North Wales

Hello again, in the theme of looking for something positive to cling to in this turbulent year. I can think of an amazing group of Bank Holidays coming up, whether you're a royalist or not, I very much doubt you'll turn down the extra holiday. Our first golf day is coming up this month, really good for golf-addict greenkeepers, who must by now be suffering from serious withdrawal symptoms after missing out on the Christmas tournament.

The Spring Tournament is being held at Denbigh GC, on April 13, and with this also being a qualifier for the BIGGA National Championship; I expect the whole field to have their most competitive heads on.

The North Wales/North West Inter-Section Golf Day takes place next month; the venue and date are in the hands of the North West Section, so when

we know more we will ask our members to do their bit, as they have so valiantly done before.

We are looking for anyone in the Section who may be handy with a bit of leather and willow, as Nick Gray, of Bathgate's, has organised a cricket match between the North Wales/ North West Sections on July 6.

If you feel you would like to get involved with this, please contact me I will happily take your details and pass on any relevant information, also we may be a little lacking in cricket gear anyone able to help out there? All offers of help will be welcome.

In local news, all hail Stu Yarwood, not only has he got the energy to become the Section's newest Master Greenkeeper but he has also become a dad again, Stu and his wife, Paula, became proud parents to, Isla Valentine, on February 1. Congratulations go to you both from the Section as a whole.

Right I think that will just about do for now so all the best until next month.

Pete Maybury,
e-mail, petemayb66@aol.com Mobile 07756001187



North West

We are now through early Spring and I can feel the grass growing outside. (Actually as I write this, it's early March and white solid outside).

Recently we attended an informal get together organised by greenkeepers in the NW, it was held at Garstang GC, with a talk from Tony Kvedaras followed by a really nice curry.

There was a large number in attendance and seemed enjoyable to all, thank-you Spencer Penwortham, for the invite and all the hard work you put into the night.

With the Season all systems go, we are looking forward to hosting the Spring tournament here at Hesketh, on April 13.

There are still some spaces available and if you are looking to play, please contact Phil Dewhurst or post on the facebook page, the tee-time is reserved from 10-11.30 and all are welcome.

Oh well it's time to go out and put the greens on temporaries, on ladies day as well. Surely there can't be much more frost now.

All the best for the upcoming season...

Peter McVicar
pdmv@hotmail.co.uk
07885347818



Sheffield

Well March seemed to disappear as fast as it arrived. We are now well into preparations for the new season and I hope the weather has been kind to us and all our courses are ready for the battle.

Firstly, I would like to put a shout out to any keen cricketers among our ranks. Mike Brear, of Rigby Taylor, has kindly organised the Sheffield Section Vs Rigby Taylor cricket match for this summer (Date TBC).

The match will take place at Phoenix Sports and Social Club and will be a family event so feel free to bring the wife and kids. There will be a BBQ and bar available.

If anyone is interested in playing, or wants to attend, then get in touch with either me or Mike himself. Mike has told me he has pretty much sorted his side so we have some work to do.

I was talking to my Gordon the other day and he informed me that he was getting an extra member of staff for the summer. Sachin, I think his name was!

Fixture cards for this year's golf should have arrived at your doorsteps, if not you will have them shortly.

Thank you to Peter Fell, and Aitkens, for supplying the fixture cards once again.

Unfortunately that's all for April but remember if you like cricket get on the phone and get your place in the team reserved.

Bye for now and have a good April.

Jim Stevens
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Midland Region



East Midlands

Hello all,

I am afraid I am rather busy at the time of writing this, so apologies for the brief nature of this update from our Section!

Mid February saw the Section take to the track in a Toro-sponsored go karting event. A total of 22 brave souls turned up ready to test their driving skills at the indoor Wymeswold track. Split into two heats with the slowest from each heat taking part in a Losers' final, then the fastest in a grand final. We all feared the worst when one of our members turned up ready to race "Stig" style with his own helmet and overalls, We soon realised this was just a trick to try and scare us out of the way!

What we realised was that those of us who had "listened to the rules" about no bumping or indeed, like me, are carrying to much weight were always going to be racing in the now renamed Heavyweight Final, as opposed to the Flyweight Category Final who had been able to whizz around the track at breakneck speed unhindered by weight!

In the Heavyweight Final Sam Voss, from Forest Hill, took third place; Andy de Wet, second, and yours truly first place, I feel at this stage I would like to apologise to Gary Thurman. Why? By his own admission Gary had become a bit like a slow moving chicane on the track, and after the first heat I realised that rather than sitting behind Gary for three or four laps it was far easier to "give him a little nudge" at the hairpin, sending him into a spin, I think I used this method five times in the final "Sorry Gary"

In the Flyweight "Racers" Final, Adi Porter, from Greetham, took third; Matt Lowe, from Woolaton, took second, with racer supreme Stefan Carter, from Forest Hill, taking the podium honours.

It should also be said that it was noted by many that some of the participants in the "Fly-

Assistant Profile

Our monthly look into the life of an assistant greenkeeper...



Name: Kevin Moore

Age: 23

Club: Garforth Golf Club

Position: Assistant

Nickname: "The machine"

1. How long have you been greenkeeping?

5 ½ years

2. What was it about the career that attracted you?

The thought of working in an outdoor environment.

3. If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be?

Would of liked to be a professional sports man.

4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?

Woodland Management and Greens Projects.

5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?

Raking bunkers and ditching.

6. What would improve the greenkeepers' lot?

The development of young greenkeepers.

7. Hobbies?

Darts, Cricket, Rugby League, Golf and sport in general

8. Favourite Band?

I am a fan of R&B music

9. Which team do you support?

Castleford Tigers

10. Your claim to fame?

Going to Super league Grand Final and having pictures took with some players .

weight" Final were sin bined for bad driving, I can only dread to think of the state of the equipment in the sheds of these guys clubs! You know who you are!

I think a great time was had by all so may thanks go to Andy Humble, and Toro, for their sponsorship, and I think we will be returning to the track again soon.

Finally, by now I hope that you have all got your entries in for the Spring Competition, and the first part of the BIGGA National Championship qualifiers, I hope to see many of you there.

Pete Smith



Midland

Well here we are, April's edition of our Section's news, and what a delicious array of such I have for you to enjoy this month. Tuesday, March 8, saw the re-arranged Christmas tournament that was unfortunately postponed due to the snow that I'm sure we all remember only too well.

This time we were blessed with glorious sunshine and the pleasure of playing Stonebridge GC, in Meridan.

The course was very well presented by Danny Jones and his fine team. Well done to you gentlemen, and, of course, our thanks to Stonebridge Golf Club for affording us the day. The main prize sponsor for the day was Crocodile Golf. Thank you, Paul.

Nearest the Pin was sponsored by Global x2, Sherriffs and Whitemoss, while the drinks and chocolate around the course was provided by Farols.

Thank you to all of our sponsors, we are most grateful to you and of course to the golf clubs. Without their kindness and grace our fine days simply could not happen. The play was a Fourball Betterball format and the results were: 1. E. Stant & L. Lewis; 2. L. Swann & P. Jefferies; 3. V. Gilroy & N. Tyler. Nearest the Pins won by L. Lewis, T. Cheese and S. Gumbrill. We all have a lucky shot or round now and again.

Please note that our Spring tournament is to be played at Bewdley Pines GC, on May

12, where the annual Scotts' Doubles draw will be made, this year's format will be Betterball rather than the usual Greensomes. Please get your entries in by the closing date, which you can find from your section calendar, fixture card, or website:

www.biggamidlandsection.com.

Please don't complain that "I didn't know", or "I couldn't find it" all the information is there in abundance if one would only look.

Now for the movers and shakers, Firstly: Ian Cureton, Deputy at Stourbridge, is moving to a course in Scotland. Ian has served Stourbridge for five years and the greenkeepers and club wish him well on his new venture.

My very good friend, Wilkeston, did the very same for the same reason. Your blushes are safe with me, Ian, all the best.

Secondly: At the old age of 30 years I spent a season in Austria at the first Nicklaus PGA course in main land Europe, something I wish I'd done in my earlier 20s. Congratulations to John Latoucho (21 years of age), of Trentham GC, who begins an internship through Ohio State University this month at Westchester Golf & Country Club for six months, before moving south for a further six months.

John will be involved in a US PGA Seniors Tour event at a club that boasts an annual budget of \$2.7m!

All the staff at Trentham are very envious and wish you luck with your new adventure, John.

Make sure they spend it wisely, and as an Austrian friend said to me once, "Go big or go home". You have, so well done, and all the very best.

And finally, just time to give the wonderful news that Paul Mills, Penn GC, and wife, Louise, have just had their second daughter, Beatrice, weighing in at 8lb 3oz. Good job you moved Paul, at this rate you would have required Flat 1 as well at Stratford. Congratulations to you both and welcome to the world Beatrice.

This month's calendar sponsor is our old friends ALS. Their website can be found at:

www.amenity.co.uk

Please consider them for you machinery needs and service.

Well, I'm sorry, but you will have to wait a whole month for the next episode.

Sean McDade.



B,B&O

The delayed Christmas Turkey Trot got off to a good start. On a cold but sunny morning in February the BB&O Section had the pleasure of visiting The Oxfordshire GC, for last year's AGM and Turkey Trot.

The Oxfordshire, set in the rolling hills of the Chilterns, and now no stranger to all who played, is located approximately 45 minutes drive northwest of London on the outskirts of the historical university town of Oxford.

Designed and built by the world-renowned architect Rees Jones, his first in Britain. No expense has been spared in creating this beautiful course. A tactical blend of bunkering, strategically placed lakes, wispy rough and wind make this a real challenge. Combine that with its natural beauty and you have all the course you'll ever need, a perfect start to 2011 as the Section relished the chance to play it.

A great turnout was recorded to battle it out for The Avoncrop Cup in Texas Scramble format, supported by Greensman, ETT, Golf and Turf and Dick the Magnificent, from Speedcut. This was followed by a postponed Christmas dinner from last year due to the atrocious weather conditions and AGM.

Barry McCluskey, from Avoncrop, presented the main prizes and the results were as follows:

1. Harewood & Friends Team, led by Dominic Lewis Team;
2. Deanwood Mob, led by Tiger Boy Lyon's;
3. The Catlin Mob, from Mid Technology.

Nearest the Pin prizes went to Ted Lewis and John Bowness and Nick Mortimer who managed to break his driver while winning The Long Drive.

A big thank you goes to The Leaderboard Group, and Adam King, our Secretary, for co-ordinating this excellent venue and for the courtesy of the course which providing the Section with fantastic golf and catering facilities which were enjoyed by all on the day.

A big thank you to Nigel and Shawn, and all the greenkeeping

staff for preparing the course to a first class standard and ensuring we all had a great day out.

Thank you to all our sponsors throughout 2010. We have had great support from the trade, which has included Sheriff, Avoncrop, Tacit, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Turner Groundcare, Golf & Turf, Brown's, Amenity Land Solutions, Headland, Banks, ETT and Speedcut Contractors.

The Annual General Meeting followed and Sid Arrowsmith was elected as the new President for the Section, followed by Alec McIndoe, Chairman; Calum Taylor, Secretary; Ted Lewis, Treasurer; Simon Marsh, Education, with Matt Nutter, Gareth Acteson, Dave Lyons, Dominic Lewis as committee helpers, with yours truly as the scribe for another year.

Frank Booth has resigned as Treasurer for the Section. A big thank you to Frank, who has been the silent man for the BB&O over the last few years providing us with reliable, well kept and accurate books while also representing the Section at all of the regional meetings. Frank is well, and in full retirement, handing over the reins to Ted Lewis, the new Treasurer. Thank you, Frank for a job very well done. We look forward to your company on and off the golf course.

Adam King has stepped down as Secretary and remains on the committee. Adam has been a great organiser and influence on the Section to move it to yet a greater height with his positive and professional manner. Adam has been chosen as a pitch inspector for ECB. "England Wales Cricket Board". This is a great accolade but one which is no surprise when you see the immaculate and First Class campus at Radley College, which Adam manages with passion and dedication. Well Done, Adam, and thanks for all your efforts in bringing the Section forward.

Nick Paris, from Datchet GC, is running the London Marathon for a charity close to his heart. This is something that will test his resolve and mental fortitude as he competes in this great race. To support Nick log into www.justgiving.com/nick-paris to make a tax free donation to "Make a Wish Foundation".

If any member has any news or views they would like to share, or would like more information

about the section and forthcoming events in 2011 you only have to log in to bbogreenkeepers.co.uk your cyberspace details and e-mail address with the new Secretary, Calum Taylor, who will only be pleased to keep you informed and up to date. Calum can be contacted on coursemanagerbmgc@yahoo.co.uk

Mark Day
mark.day@tacitgolf.co.uk

South West and South Wales



South West

Hello people, I trust that you are all well. As I sit down to write this month's Section letter, I find that we are now in March. Firstly I ask myself, where has the beginning of 2011 gone? Secondly, why is it still so cold, 0.5, my car read this morning, as I was driving to work! I think you'll all agree with me when I say, "Spring! Where is spring?" Just picture it now, the warmer weather, lighter evenings, and beer gardens. Time for me to book my holiday!

During March, you would have been aware that the EGU, was holding a number of road shows around the country, titled "GOLF ENVIRONMENT". Sponsored by John Deere. Having one of them held at Minchinhampton New course and attending this myself, it's safe to say that it was a rather worthwhile event. I wonder how many of you take into consideration the fact you could help reduce the carbon footprint, help the environment, help to save energy.....but what I think is most important....HELP SAVE MONEY! We all know to turn a light switch off when leaving a room, but are you aware that we could be doing so much more, without really changing anything. Think about it guys and help save your club some money.

Back to the Section, we have recently been having many Workshops for you all. Manual Handling and Chainsaw training has just taken place more recently. Subsidy and CPD

points were rewarded for both of these, ensure that you also receive the same benefits by getting involved. It's great when everyone tells me what they want, and trust me, I'm trying to ensure that everyone is catered for.

Very shortly we have our first Section fixture coming up, the famous AM/AM at Chipping Sodbury GC. So invite you Secretary/Manager, your Green Chairman or even your best mate who lives next door to you. This is always a great fixture in our diary and always a great time for everyone to get together. I look forward to seeing everyone at Chipping Sodbury on Thursday, April 14. Do your bit to help get the 2011 fixture list off to a great start.

As always, please feel free to contact myself at anytime, even better still, forward me on a short story about what's happening up your end. See you soon

adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk
07732503855



South Coast

Hello everyone, welcome to April's Around the Green. There is not a lot of Section news to report on at this present time. However, our last committee meeting did bring up a few points for discussion, Firstly with regret that our Section seminar had to be cancelled in February as we, we were unable to get a firm conformation date from guest speakers. It was a great shame for me personally as it was to be held at Milton Abbey School, and it was a chance for me to show you all, what life is like at the School..

We have decided that in October this year we will try and put the Seminar back on, it will be held on the half term of the school which is October 19-30, A day has yet to be decided, but it look forward to welcoming you all to Milton Abbey School. Let's hope the snow hasn't fallen by then.

We also discussed how as a Section we could communicate better when organising our golf tournaments, although a flyer is put out for each tournament per-

haps the use of Facebook would help the younger greenkeepers in the Section communicate better between one another, we do have our own South Coast Section Facebook page so do have a look and see what is happening. I hope that our Spring Tournament flyer in may will be put on Facebook for members to view, I hope that this way we may get more support for our golf tournaments. So just to give you all an early reminder our spring tournament will be at Liphook GC, on May 19. This will be an 18 hole Stableford, and is the qualifier for this year's National Championship, although a fair distance to travel for some Section members, please try and support the day.

For me life at Milton Abbey is constantly changing, we are going full co-ed in September 2012 and two new boarding houses are to be built this summer which is really exciting news for the school as we look to expand and develop. Our school farm is also developing and expanding, more horses, sheep, chickens, pigs the list continues. My job description seems to be changing from day to day.

Well a happy Easter to you all, let's hope that the Premiership title race is still open, when you read this, Chelsea can still do it I think!

Joe Cooper



South Wales

I hope that by now the growing season has just started and you have got the old Paladin and Allen National oiled up and ready to go!

First, some news about forthcoming educational events for this month.

On Thursday, April 7, the Section will hold its Annual Education Seminar at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club. Sponsors for the day will be Frank Sutton and Powercut, John Deere's distributors for South Wales. Thanks in advance to them. Among the speakers will be Ian Booth of John Deere, Richard Windows and Paul Woodham, of the STRI. Also BIGGA's, Tracey Maddison and Sami Collins, will travel down from HQ to

give a presentation about the Association and its future aims. It looks like being an interesting day. Price for the day is £20 which includes coffee on arrival and the usual excellent buffet lunch. Contact Steve Chappell to reserve a place.

Still on education, the winter series of evening lectures concludes at Cardiff GC, on Wednesday, April 15. Head Greenkeeper, Nigel 'Dan' Harden will host a course walk where he will show us the work that has been carried out on the course over the past few years, including some greens reconstruction. This will be followed by a presentation by Adrian Masters, of Headland. This event will start at 5.30pm and is once again sponsored by Countrywide. Thanks again to them.

Don't forget the IOG Annual Dinner And Dance, which this year is back to its traditional venue of The Swalec Stadium and is on Friday, April 15. Give Steve Chappell a ring if you would like to attend.

Congratulations to David Jakeway, Course Manager at Bryn Meadows Golf Hotel & Spa, who recently became the proud father to a little girl, Daisy May. All the best to you and your partner Rachel from the Section, although you will probably be too tired to read this!

That's it for now. Next month I should have the dates for the spring golf competition and other forthcoming events. Have a great April and Easter.

PS. A big 'good luck' to William and Kate for their forthcoming wedding. I know I didn't receive an invite (it might still be in the post) but you can still come to the IOG dinner. Just remember to bring a raffle prize.

Your Humble Servant
Ceri Richards



Devon and Cornwall

Hello all,

A Section meeting was held at Warren GC, Dawlish Warren, on Wednesday, February 9. 50 attendees enjoyed either a Course walk or an Individual Stableford Golf competition. John Welsford, Course Manager, kindly led the course walk

around what is a very unique environment to manage. The Warren is built on a sand bank peninsula that is home to rare species and is deemed an SSSI rated site.

John explained how the club is restricted in terms of what management practices are and are not allowed. The fairways in particular receive little or no maintenance due to restrictions including not being able to use seed in the divot mix! They have also undergone some extensive gorse removal to encourage heather regeneration, guided by Natural England.

Although a reasonable free draining site, at High Tide it is subject to flooding and John explained defences put in place to combat the issue of rising water levels, including a newly installed pump, pumping water back out to sea. The course and, in particular, the greens were in fantastic condition for the time of year! Congratulations to John and his team!

The golf on the day was won by Deputy at the Warren, Patrick Twitchen, with 41 pts, second was Greg O'Reilly, St Mellion, with 40 pts and third was Mark Tucker, Saunton, with 39 pts. Nearest the Pin went to James Sheehan, Truro GC, and Longest Drive to Greg O'Reilly. An extra raffle prize was awarded to a course walker who was Tony Gooch, Great Torrington.

The educational speaker for the afternoon was Roger Davey, from Irritect. Roger is very well known and respected in the area and gave a very professional and informative presentation on the anatomy of an irrigation system. Thanks to Roger for taking time out of his busy schedule and for delivering a fantastic presentation. Thanks to John Welsford and his staff at the Warren and to all the staff at the club for their kind hospitality.

On Wednesday, February 23, a Drainage Workshop/Seminar was held at St Mellion International Resort, Cornwall. Over 70 attendees enjoyed a very interesting and thought provoking day, despite the weather and very wet conditions!

The day started with a practical demonstration from Shelton's Drainage Ltd Showing off their "System 25 Trencher" and their "Gravel Bander". Followed by further practical demonstrations from Ecololve with their "Drill and Fill" machine and Campey

with their "Sandcat" machine. All equipment and demonstrators performed extremely well, which was very impressive considering the surface conditions! Mike Bush, St Mellion, also talked through their pipe drainage system on the Kernow 2nd Green, which was installed completely in-house.

After a Cornish pasty lunch, the attendees headed up to the impressive new conference facilities.

Two seminar presentations were delivered. Firstly from John Reynolds, from Vertigo Drainage System. John explained the principles of this new solution to drainage issues. The second speaker was Steve Gingell, from the STRI.

Steve discussed the principles of drainage discussing the science behind water movement through the surface and soil profile. Huge thanks to all demonstrators and speakers involved and a special thank you to Mike Bush, Course Manager at St Mellion, and his Green Staff, for staging and helping with the organisation of the day.

January saw the loss of one of our oldest members, Mr Caleb Charles Moore. Mr Moore passed away on January 5, aged 96.

Having being involved with clubs in the Midlands, He retired to the area and became a member at East Devon GC and became a Life Member of BIGGA.

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South East



Surrey

I have heard it said, although I don't know by whom, that we all have a book or novel inside us just waiting for the right moment to pop out. I, at this moment, would be pleased if I could think of just a few lines for this edition!

Thank goodness then for the Gentlemen's Dinner at Walton Heath GC on March 4. I am pleased to confirm that Jason

Hunt, Addington Palace GC, is this year's winner with a magnificent gross 69. The nearest I come to a 69 is the number on the front of my meagre dwelling and not you know what. Tony Bremer was the only other Surrey member to win a prize by coming 2nd in the 11 to 20 handicap section. The event concluded with an After Dinner Speaker whose name now escapes me together with all his jokes.

Have you read Ron Christie's excellent Surrey Section Newsletter 2011? He started by thanking John Ross for having been a worthy Chairman and committee member for many years and welcoming Les Howkins as our new Chairman. Ron then asked for volunteers to contact Ian McMillan, at Walton Heath GC, if they could help at the British Seniors competition July 21-24 ianmcmillan@waltonheath.com. Rising costs will increase the price of members golf events to £25 ensuring that the committee's annual 'away day' to the south of France is not affected.

Surrey won the Annual Sussex v Essex v Surrey at The Three Rivers CG in Essex and due to an absentee, I played for Sussex. The next paragraph in Ron's newsletter is not worth the read and the mention of Your's Truly was most hurtful. Gareth Roberts reached the top of Kilimanjaro and any extra sponsorship will greatly help the Autistic Children Charity. Finally, who is that good looking chap in the visor? No it's not Ian Poulter or Darren Clark, it's one of your committee. If you know, write the answer on a £20 note, give it to me and it will go to the Autistic Children Charity.

Brian 'Regain' Willmott



Essex

February and March are normally quite months for the Section, so for that reason I don't have very much to report, though the following has been put in place by the Section committee.

Education. Our first in a series of One Day courses has started with a First Aid course,

which was held at The Burstead Golf Club, in early March. Once announced it did not take many days for it to fill up and another is planned shortly and may even have passed. We are also looking to run other One Day courses in the near future, so if you have any ideas or you need a specific course, then please contact Ian Wood, our Education Officer, by email: ian.wood@romfordgolfclub.co.uk

Golf. The new golf season is nearly upon us and our first venue is at Forrester Park, Thursday, May 5, for the Spring Trophy.

The new fixture book will be out mid April and entry forms will be available in this book, they are also available for download from the website. Don't forget to get your entries in early for this event.

Football. Our football match against the Sussex Section is on the Monday, May 23, at Upton Park, home to West Ham United Football Club, we have a list of players willing to play and trials are underway to pick the team. Kick off is at 2pm.

Social Networking. If you have been following things on the website you will have noticed that we now have a Facebook site and are also on Twitter. Both are Essex Bigga to log in.

Website. By the time you read this, I should have finished the new look website and have it up and running.

If you have anything for inclusion in Greenkeeper International or on the Sections Website www.essexbigga.co.uk please contact me on 07764-862.337 or at essexbigga@talktalk.net

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer & Web Master

Section Notes

To appear in the next issue please email your notes to scott@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of this month