

golf the next day. Please contact me asap to secure a place as we expect this to be very popular!

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December is here and we can look back on what has been a very challenging year and look forward with great hope that next year will be much kinder. The Section has been busy with a few people moving on and others taking up new positions. Steve Richardson moved from the New Course at Sunningdale Golf Club to Parkstone Golf Club and we welcome him to the Section and wish him well. Roger Myatt has moved from Knighton Heath Golf Club to Doncaster and again we wish him well in his new position.

Alan Magee moves from Remedy Oak and is the new Course Manager at Knighton Heath. We congratulate him on his first appointment in that position, I have worked with Alan and know he will be a great asset to the club.

As Alan has moved on there have been promotions in the Remedy Oak team. Ed Carey has been appointed Deputy Course Manager and Rob Wills to First Assistant, congratulations to you both.

Finally, Graham Bungay, Head Greenkeeper at Wellow Golf Club has decided on a career change leaving the industry, so Simon Justice, from Alresford Golf Club, has been appointed Head Greenkeeper, again his first appointment in this position. Congratulations Simon, we wish you well and every success!

I know Robert spoke about BTME last month but a gentle reminder to make the effort to attend. There is an excellent education package covering every aspect of your jobs and the added knowledge not only expands your own but also helps keep you up to date of best practice and potential cost savings to your budgets with new developed products. The show is

also excellent and the opportunity to network with colleagues is excellent so make it a week not to miss.

Our own section seminar on February 15 is looking exciting and we have an excellent day planned. The venue is the magnificent Milton Abbey School where Joe Cooper is the Head Groundsman. Joe has been a long standing supporter of the Section both at our golf and education events but not many have had the opportunity to see the complexity of his position in managing the schools multi use sports fields.

We have been fortunate to attract some excellent speakers again this year including Jim McKenzie MBE, Cameron McMillan, Jonathan Worrall and Robert Wills.

The presentations will be held before lunch and then after lunch we will have a guided tour of the grounds where Joe will give us an insight to the challenges he and his team face in managing the grounds. All details will be very soon and we hope that you will as supportive to the day as you have before.

Our Section fixture card will also be with you very soon, which outlines the year ahead. As a Committee we are trying very hard to communicate information to you whether it though these pages, on the BIGGA website or on our Facebook page. If you feel we can do anything better please let us know, it's your Section and we endeavour to do our best for you. We all lead busy lives and times are difficult but attending section events is rewarding for yourselves and the committee so please try and support the section as much as you can, your section needs you!

I would like to finish by thanking Chris Bitten for all his hard work as Section Secretary. He worked very hard on the section's behalf and he thankfully remains an important committee member. Thanks Chris.

That just leaves me to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I hope it brings you everything you wish for. Enjoy the festivities, be safe and let's begin 2012 with a positive attitude, renewed hope and energy to make it a great year.

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**Jim
Croxton**
Chief
Executive

It was a privilege recently to attend both the South East Region and South West and South Wales Region Conferences. Education underpins all that BIGGA does so it was heartening to see that the turnout out at both Conferences was excellent and there was a wide cross section of age and experience present.

The format at both conferences allowed for interesting and thought provoking presentations including insights from turf managers in other sports. Importantly there was also time for question and answer sessions, along with sufficient breaks to allow Members to discuss the presentations heard as well as the hot topics currently affecting their own facilities.

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A recurring theme was the challenge everyone faces to produce the playing surface required by the members or owners of each facility. This was as true in golf as for the Essex County Cricket groundsman who discussed having to prepare either a dustbowl for a world class spinner one week and then a green top for seamers the next while I was astounded to learn that at The Hurlingham Club the croquet lawns were expected to stimp at over 10 feet for major competitions. Preparing the golf course in the best condition possible is the ambition of all of our members but it is clear that the Course Manager needs to be fully aware of the expectations of his or her Green Committee/Club Manager/Owner and, more importantly, needs to manage those expectations very carefully so that both parties aim for an achievable and agreed standard of presentation.

During the same week I also attended the Golf Club Managers Association's biennial conference in Hinckley. This was an excellent event with a wide range of topics discussed. Customer service was a high priority throughout but I came away with the strong impression that the modern Club Manager needs to be focussed on the sustainability and playability of the golf course. The conference itinerary included no fewer than seven different presentations related to elements of course management, it was not by any means an attempt to arm the Club Manager with the skills required to manage the course itself rather an opportunity to help them understand better the role that the Course Manager plays. This can only be a positive step in BIGGA's journey to raise the awareness of how vital professional course management is to the future health of the golf industry.

I look forward to meeting many more members at the various seminars and conferences that pepper the winter months and of course at BTME in just a few weeks time.

Jim Croxton