

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

At the time of writing this report we are in the grips of the largest snowfall this side of Christmas that most of us on the East coast of Scotland can remember.

We had two educational events planned for December but at the moment it is hard to say if either of them will take place.

On the 8th, Lynn Jopling, from the Scottish Golf course Environmental Group, was scheduled to talk to us about the work they carry out and the help they can offer Course Managers.

Then on the 16th, Lee Strutt is hoping to show members the heather project they are carrying out at West.

One event which is definitely arranged is an evening in the Elmwood Training room with Grant Moir from the R&A's Rules Department.

Grant will cover some points on how greenkeeping work can impact on the rules of golf and this will take place on March 9.

More details will appear on the website as well as a couple of other seminars and a possible irrigation workshop for February/March time which may be arranged at short notice so keep logging onto www.bigga-centralsection.org.uk for the latest information.

On behalf of the Chairman and Committee I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year and that 2011 brings sunshine and birdies!

Gordon Moir



Ayrshire

Hello there, hope you are all well. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for the New Year ahead! Here's hoping it's a good one. I'm sure everyone has eaten their fair share over the festive season, I know I have! Back to the gym I think.... If I can remember how to get there?

Well, as I sit here writing my notes for the January issue in my Cosy warm abode, the snow is falling all around! Not only has it fallen around three inches today, it's now laying on top of last week's frozen covering.

Let's just say I've found getting out and about rather difficult. To be honest with you all I'm getting a bit peeved off with it... No fuel at the pumps, no salt available, stocks running low in the cupboards.

Personally I'd like the rain back, as cabin fever has set in. I bet all the lads on the golf courses in the area have varnished and painted all the markers and benches at least twice over, due to this weather.

The snow has arrived earlier than last, but I really hope it doesn't last into February like it did in 2010.

That would be a disaster not just personally but economically too! Get in touch with any stories or news you have of your own experiences of the snow. Here's hoping the next time you hear from me all this snow has gone!

Here's to a great New Year... cheers!

John A Mair
Johnmair982@hotmail.co.uk
07500874449



West

Happy New Year to all and hopefully a good season will be had by everybody, here's hoping the weather will be slightly better than 2010.

Snow, snow and more snow seems to be the order of the day, or certainly in this part of the country that's the case. As I type this up there is one foot of snow lying outside and the staff are busy painting, snow clearing, and completing health and safety checks. I hope the conditions pick up to allow our so called winter programme to be completed as at present I have two bunkers under construction with no vision of a completion date. Well at least the golfers aren't moaning.

Not a great deal of activity in the last few weeks I'm afraid, just the seminar at Williamwood Golf Club on November 30, which surprisingly was attended by 20 people. Credit must go to Graham O'Connor and his boss, Martin, for producing a very interesting and thought provoking talk. Congratulations to all who attended for making the effort and well done Gerry Bruen for supplying the venue, I hope nobody got stuck on the way home.

The only other event arranged was the Annual Dinner at Victoria's, which had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers attending from other areas of the country, causing the Victoria's to contact us and cancel. Due to our commitment a few hardy souls decided to have a couple of drinks in town as we didn't want to cancel our pre-arranged plans. It turned out that ten people turned up visiting All Bar One and One Up. A good time was had by all in attendance and thanks to those who were

able to turn up.

I hope to attend Harrogate this year, weather dependant, and will report on how things went in the March issue, but until then I everybody has a good start to the year and keeps well.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any events pending, sponsor walks, wedding, or birth, you can get in touch by phoning 0141-942-5554 or 07790823914, or by e-mail on stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com

Thanks again
Stuart Taylor



Northern

It's snow joke is it! I wrote these notes at the beginning of December and I bet you had all your markers rubbed down, painted your benches and done any necessary maintenance. It's going to be a long Winter me thinks. Hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year, and that you didn't wake up on the first with a stinking hangover.

With the weather being the way it has been recently there hasn't been a lot of news unfortunately. Joanne O'Neill has stepped up at Newmachar's Swailend course to become Patrick Woods' Assistant. Well done Jo you thoroughly deserve it! Now you can boss Matty around at work now as well as at home!

I can reveal the venues for the Section outings next year too. The Spring outing moves down to Niall Bruce's Montrose Links and the Autumn outing is being held at Paul Sharp's Peterculter.

That's your lot for this month guys. If you do have any info please drop me a line on 07813889374 or if you do own a computer, email me on benbrookes@yahoo.co.uk.

Ben Brookes, Murcar Links

Northern



North East

My first news came from Graham Chambers Course Manager of Longhirst Golf Club he wrote the following; Recently and tragically, Longhirst Hall Assistant Course Manager, Stuart Wilson, died, Stu had worked at Longhirst since leaving school over 17 years before. Director of Golf, Graham Chambers, said, "This came as a huge shock to me, my staff and members. He truly was a one off and always went above and beyond what was expected. Last summer when we hosted our first Euro Pro event, I thanked him for his efforts and all he said was that he wouldn't have missed it for the world. "That's what I'm here for boss." That summed Stu up totally. Stu had a very active life and was always followed by his loyal spaniel Buke. We are still coming to terms with losing Stu and there are lasting memories of him all over the complex, through his work with me during the development of Longhirst. Like I said at his funeral, Longhirst was a huge part of Stuart's life and he will always be a huge part of Longhirst. A memorial competition is being set up around Easter 2011 in his name. Our thoughts are with his 3 year old daughter, Shaula.

Having since spoke to Graham I have asked if we could play our Autumn comp. in 2011 as a tribute to Stuart. It's expected to be played in late September. Times and date tba.

Other news around Section is as follows. I recently received an invitation to attend a meeting with Wayne Reid and Tony Milan both of John Marley Centre which is part of Newcastle College on the courses they provide for greenkeepers in the region. Not only was I there but representatives from both Northumberland and Durham Golf Unions; the Secretary from Newcastle Utd G.C; John Nicholson, of John Nicholson Associates, as this was the first Sports Turf Meeting Liaison Meeting, It was used as an information giving session to advise

members of the new Sports Turf Provision at Newcastle College and introduce them to the range of qualifications at the college. So if anybody needs any info please contact Wayne Reid on 0191 2004704.

Talking of greenkeeper qualifications, Steven Blakey of Close House, has recently completed Level 3, and still on about Close House, has anybody been over there to have a look around their new work building It's well worth a look at very spacious room for the staff with all the mod.cons and a workshop to die for, should you be a mechanic.

Well that's about it for another month maybe I will bump into one or two of you at BTME no doubt Terry Charlton will be providing a coach for us again. Thanks again Terry.

Jimmy Richardson



Northern

Hello everyone hope you are all well. Firstly I would like to wish all Section members a happy New Year for 2011, hope you have all got over the over eating and drinking from the festive season.

Sitting writing these few words for the magazine looking out on six inches of snow - so much for global warming! The winter jobs have started even earlier this year, making new tee blocks, painting posts, sharpening and servicing mowers for the seemingly distant new season. We have a full calendar of events for the new year and I hope they are as well supported as last year. We have delayed news of a Section seminar until we hear news of a regional seminar organised by the regional reps, and notifying everyone through the magazine. No more news or gossip this month but hope to see you all at our first golf event at the K.P. Club Pocklington.

Any news or gossip please pass it on to me Frank Stewart, 72 West Park Grove, Roundhay, LS8 2DY. Mob: 07947401278.

email frankstewart3@hotmail.co.uk.



North Wales

Happy New Year welcome to 2011. Goodness it only seems like a few years ago we were welcoming in the new Millennium, where does the time go?

November and December were a complete disaster for us - so much for putting the construction work to bed before Christmas break, the ground was so frozen the tracks on the 360 earthmover we were using stuck to the ground, not that the ground was anywhere near soft enough to work anyway!

We can only hope that with having January and February weather so early that January and February are more like November and December.

The weather also put the boot in on our ever popular Christmas tournament too with it being postponed from December 1 to December 8, then finally cancelled and, with the AGM also cancelled, the committee all agreed to carry on their current roles until another date can be arranged when we can officially stand for the positions on committee again.

I hope to see you all at our late winter/early spring seminar instead, details of content, date and venue to follow in due course.

We are still hoping to run a coach to Harrogate later this month.

With seats free to members and at a nominal price to non-members it has to be the only real bargain you are going to see this year, so please remember to mention seat availability to your Secretaries, Greens Chairmen or other interested parties within your clubs and register with Jez Hughes if you want any seats.

I can't think of anything else to write for now so, all the best until next month.

Pete Maybury
e-mail petemayb66@aol.com
mobile 07756001187



North West

Well, the new year has come and we are now all looking forward to Harrogate, as I write this we have had two weeks of solid frost and there looks like we have lots more to come. Fortunately for us in Southport we have had no snow to date, however, the frost has brought an end to the turfing we had hoped would be completed by year end and brought forward the tree work.

Unfortunately the AGM and golf at Wilmslow had to be cancelled due to the weather and the AGM has taken place at Birchwood, the home of our Chairman. Alas even with my crystal ball, I can't tell you what has happened but by visiting our facebook page (bigganorthwest) we will keep you informed of all that is going on.

This year we have an exciting programme for all members, this will include golf outings, course walks, education opportunities and of course the BIGGA National Championship, at West Lincs GC, John Muir and his team always make this true links course a gem to play and it is in my opinion one of the finest links courses in the land, with all parts of the course a joy to behold.

Hopefully we are now enjoying a mild January and many people have the opportunity to visit Harrogate, not only for the shiny machines and fantastic education experience, but also the superb networking possibilities.

Here's to a dry warm February.

Peter McVicar
pdmv@hotmail.co.uk

Midland



East Midlands

Hello all,
Ah summer sun, warm gentle breezes and the smell of freshly mown grass... "Wake up, Pete!

Around The Green

We've got a foot of snow to clear!" How quickly times change, I sincerely hope that, as I sit here now, the snow we all have is only a blip and not a precursor to an even harder winter than last year. It seems that every year I am wishing that summer returns sooner than I did the previous year!

A quiet month in the Section this time around, so not much to report I am afraid. The final of the Headland Pairs was played in October with National Champ, Paul Frith and partner Nigel Colley, defeating Ian Hurst and Paul Kendal 5&3. Hopefully in the next issue I will be able to report on the Christmas tournament, but with a heavy snow cover things are looking doubtful.

In the new year when memories of Harrogate start to fade we will hope to be offering Go Karting as an event, this will be sponsored by Toro, and in place of the usual trip which we did not do last year. We hope to have information out to you all in the next few weeks with a date in February in mind.

I hope to see many of you at Harrogate this year, and hope you all make the most of the education and seminars that are laid on for your benefit.

Regards to all
Pete smith



Midland

Let me firstly wish all a happy New Year from your committee (which is to stand as last year, with the exception of K.T.Blake) and personally by myself. Also a happy New Year to our various and very kind sponsors of the Midland Section, indeed without them our Section as a whole could not be run with any meaningful manner. With this in mind, the Section is proposing to run four seasonal informal educational half day events covering everyday greenkeeping practices and concerns such as mechanics, fertiliser and pesticide use and regulations, grasses and weed identification, and seasonal uneven growth considerations regarding in particular greens. These informal seminars will offer learned speakers by our

various sponsors which I'm sure will be found most informative and cost saving in our aim to produce the best of our courses in this very demanding time.

Although we are in the early stages of organising the "Four Seasons" Midland Education Days, we have pencilled in for: Winter, February 23; Spring, April 13; Summer, July 27, and Autumn, November 9.

As we have the second largest Section in area, the venues shall, where possible, be located as widely as is practicable within the Section. For further information please visit the Section's website: www.biggamidlandsection.com <<http://www.biggamidlandsection.com/>> or see the literature as kindly delivered by our supportive local reps. I will of course keep you updated within our notes.

This month's calendar page sponsor is Burrows Grass Machinery; please consider them for your Ransomes & Jacobsen machinery and maintenance. You can call their fine team on: 0870 242 6952. This brings us nicely on to the winner of this year's photo calendar competition. The bottle of Lansons champagne promised to the winner of the best picture sent in for our calendar was very difficult to decide. With this we have awarded two prizes, each going to Ian Holborn of Oxley Park and Steve Mucklow, of Beau Desert, (this month's photo). Well done to you both.

Our thanks to all that sent in pictures, although most were from rep's and committee members! So get clicking for next year's calendar, it is more than probable that it's worth a nice bottle of Champers. What a civilised way to bring in the New Year.

Unfortunately last year's Christmas tournament had to be cancelled due to inclement snow conditions at Woburn and indeed the rest of the country. Thankfully, Woburn has agreed to afford us this year's Christmas tournament on December 9, so get it in your diary. For those who missed last year's Christmas tournament, don't worry Rhys is rescheduling the event for sometime in the middle of March at, hopefully, a links course. The exact date and venue is being sort as I compile these notes and I should be able to inform you next month of the specific details.

Our thanks to the original sponsors "Crocodile" for honouring and supporting the rescheduled Christmas tournament in March of this year. Even if you didn't wish to play in the original event but fancy attending the rescheduled one in March give Gary a ring on; 07780 953 764. All of course are more than welcome, the more the merrier.

Once again a happy New Year.

Sean McDade



B,B&O

Another year is over - happy New Year to you all. The season of 2010 has passed and the inclement weather conditions are hopefully now just a faded bad memory. Father Christmas has again hammered his credit card - eaten one too many mince pies, experimented with a home brew Pink Gin kit and spent evenings wondering what happened to last year's resolutions which bit the dust. Welcome to 2011 the Chinese Year of the Rabbit.

Although the world's Rabbit economy will technically be out of recession, we will all be subject to high taxation this year. This is because the Metal Rabbit is an introspective, home loving pacifist with a sharp business acumen who will ensure the preservation of all the good things in life. It is a year in which the family will come first and VAT will come second.

Hopefully, he will not wreak havoc on the greens.

Christmas Turkey Trot and AGM got off to a bad start. It has been postponed until February 9 this year due to the unpredictable weather conditions which spread over the length and breadth of the BB&O, making transport and hitting golf balls a hazardous occupation. This date is yet to be confirmed.

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, Browns, Amenity Land Solutions, Headland, ETT and Speedcut Contractors.

Simon Marsh has been hard at work and has organised an education seminar for the Section to be held on Tuesday, February 1, at Harleyford Golf and Country Club.

Sponsored by Countrywide Farmers our speakers include Mike Garner, from Maxicrop, who will talk on the benefits of natural plant extracts.

Paul Worcester, Course Manager Minchinhampton Golf Club and Chairman of BIGGA, on The Business of Golf.

Simon Barnaby, on behalf of Scott's Professional, talking on Managing Plant Health to provide Perfect Turf Surfaces.

Derek Smith, DFL & Johnson's, on the Pro's and Con's of Seed Coatings.

Jim McKenzie, Estate and Courses Manager The Celtic Manor Resort, will be giving what will be a fascinating talk with insight to the build up and climax of one of the finest greenkeeping achievements of modern times - The 2010 Ryder Cup.

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 and leave your cyberspace details and e-mail address with the Secretary, Adam King, who will only be to pleased to keep you informed and up to date via e mail. Adam can be contacted on ajk@radley.org.uk

See you all at BTME in a few weeks time and wishing you all a great start to the New Year!

Mark Day



Mid Anglia

Writing this article is a good excuse to be in my nice warm office leaving the lads outside pruning on a snow covered golf course. I can barely remember the last time this happened in November. Maybe our Autumn meeting, held at Berkhamstead GC, in October, was a sign of things to come! Very cold, hard frosty greens, thanks to Gerald for letting us play on them.

Thirty two golfers braved the conditions, some fairing better than others. Results: 1. G.

Bruce, 33 pts, then countback required for three people on 32 pts, 2. Jeff Fenn; 3. Nigel Phelan with Paul Crouch just missing out on a prize. Sorry Paul!

Mark Ellis won Best Trade Prize, J. Smith, J. Haley, V. Le Gon and S. Bush winners of Nearest the Pins. A very big thank you to R. Catlin and D. Murphy, of AM-Tec, for sponsoring the day and presenting some great prizes to the winners.

Thanks again to Gerald and his team for the superb condition of the course and to the Berkhamsted in-house staff for looking after us so well off the course.

The Section AGM was also held at Berkhamsted, a fairly brief affair as always, minutes approved from last year, reports from Committee, no matters arising, and the election of officers for the coming year – and fortunately previously elected committee members agreeing to stand for another year.

Craig Spooner is standing down due to other commitments, as well as becoming a new Dad again! The Committee would like to thank him for his past contributions and hope to see him at future golf days. This leaves a space on committee so anyone out there wish to offer their services, please contact Gerald at gerald@berkhamstedgc.co.uk

I would just like to remind you that we are running a chainsaw and spraying course in February or March 2011, all enquiries to Gerald at the above e-mail address.

That's all for now, Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Nigel Phelan

South East



Sussex

G'day Mates,

As the winter takes a strong hold on us all and very little is happening on the courses I have just a few lines this month. I take this opportunity to introduce myself as your new representative of the

Sussex Section for "Around the Green". I welcome your input and look forward to hearing from you with any news for the section.

Due to the recent inclement weather, the Turkey Trot planned for December 3 has been rescheduled for January 14, at Worthing Golf Club. Here's hoping our turkeys are also in deep freeze.

If Brian Wilmott is reading this, I have just come back from three weeks in Western Australia, but I will bore him with the details when I see him.

I am sure everyone wants to send their best wishes for a speedy recovery to Mike Gould, at Copthorne Golf Club, who has not been too well.

That's all for now but to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2011.

Regards,
Eric Green
01424 214600
TheGreens837@aol.com



Kent

Watcha All

By the time you get to read this, hopefully, you will have had a cracking Christmas and New Year and the world will be green again! A week of living in a Chrimbo card is more than enough for me! I'm just thankful that the snow held off for our Turkey Trot, which was held at Birchwood Park on November 25.

The Course, as ever, was in fantastic condition and is a credit Rob Holland and his lads, two of whom, Tony and Al played on the day. Thanks also to the catering staff for a lovely bit of nose bag. We would like to thank everyone who played on the day and all the trade members who, not only sponsor the Section, but who also donated raffle prizes for the day. We would like to say a very big thank you to the Scotts Company for the Scotts Shield, the hotly contended prize for the day. We would also like to say a huge thank you to Vic Maynard and Ernest Doe and Sons for the life saving "refreshment" wagon, cheers Vic! The results for the day were: 1.

Adam White, North Foreland; 2. Darren Child Hawkhurst; 3. Yours truly, Redlibbets. The trade winner was, all round good egg, Larry Pearman, from Lely, Don't forget those WHU tickets mate! The Nearest the Pin winner was Mark Todd, Wilderness, and Longest Drive, Yours truly, again. Sorry, Duncan!

Our AGM went very smoothly, and quickly, thankfully. No controversy and the status quo being maintained.

Details of next year's fixture list are available on the website www.kentgreenkeepers.com. We are proposing to run a Pairs Knockout next summer so please let either Rob or I know if you'd like to enter.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the Section in 2010 and look forward to seeing you all in 2011.

All the best
Chairman Kev Morris



Essex

A belated "Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year" to you all.

As you will all probably know by now we had to postpone the AGM and Christmas Team Golf Match, due to the adverse weather that we encountered at the beginning of December. We have rearranged this event for Thursday, January 27; it is still at the Essex Golf & Country Club.

I will be putting more information on the Website nearer the day, but if you did not enter a team for the December date you still have time to enter one for the new date in January. Previous entries will be carried forward to the January date.

A quite month on the Section front, though we have received all the nominations for the Committee and the Sponsors representative. These will be announced at the postponed AGM.

Because the AGM was put back, I do not have so much to announce this month, though we are planning an educational event of some kind in February or March and are actively put-

Assistant Profile

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

Name: Will Barnes
Age: 16
Club: Remedy Oak GC
Position: Apprentice



1. How long have you been in greenkeeping?

Six months

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

Working outside

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

A Business student.

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

Raking bunkers because it makes a difference to the course

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

Divotting tees because it seems to take ages

6. What one thing – other than a pay rise – would improve the greenkeepers' lot?

Golfers taking more notice of the job we do.

7. Hobbies?

Golf

8. Favourite Band?

Mark Ronson

9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?

Arsenal

10. What is your claim to fame?

I asked Harry Redknapp if he was an Arsenal fan.

Want to appear as an Assistant Profile?

To receive a questionnaire, email scott@bigga.co.uk

ting something together that will interest everyone.

This year's golf days have been a great success with more players entering. Keep it up for the next season, it's been great to see you all and the ambiance has been very good again this year.

We would like to thank once again all the following clubs that allowed us to play there courses' in 2010, Spring Trophy - South Essex Golf & Country Club; Summer Trophy - Channels Golf & Country Club; Romford Golf Club (Captains v Greenkeepers); Bentley Golf Club (Tuckwell Team Challenge); Essex Trophy - Boyce Hill Golf Club; Autumn Trophy - Benton Hall Golf & Country Club; Three Rivers Golf & Country Club (Triangular Team Tournament, Essex v Surrey v Sussex).

Golf days for 2011 are as follows: -

Spring Trophy: TBC. (Due to a Royal Wedding)

Summer Trophy: Nazeing Golf Club.

Essex Trophy: Chelmsford Golf Club.

Autumn Trophy: Langdon Hills Golf Club.

Christmas Team Event & AGM: Orsett Golf Club.

Exact fixture dates are still to be finalized with the above clubs.

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 & Webmaster

South West and South Wales



South Coast

Happy New Year to greenkeepers everywhere! I guess you've all recovered from the festivities and are all enjoying being back in the old routine.

At the time of writing we on the South Coast are experiencing over heaviest snowfall for 40 years, so the older members have informed me. It's certainly the first time I've seen snow in

November and it looks strange to see snow on the ground and some of the oaks still in full leaf coverage. The signs are were in for a long winter, this spell of unseasonal weather has given us at Brokenhurst the chance to begin our woodland programme earlier than expected. This works hand in hand with plans next autumn to re develop three of our current holes which will be quite an exciting time for me and my staff to watch unfold.

Changing the subject I hope by the time this goes to press that England are on the verge of retaining The Ashes Down Under. Being an avid cricket lover I have been losing hours of sleep staying up to watch. If the lads continue how they've started it should all be worthwhile.

Back home not much news for me to mention apart from the annual South Coast Section Seminar, which looks like including some quality and interesting speakers. It will be in late February (date TBC) the venue has changed to Milton Abbey School. Watch this space for more details. All of this year's fixtures are confirmed and we have a quartet of great course to visit, they include Liphook, Brokenhurst Manor, Waterloo and High Post. We have had some really good numbers at the comps this year so keep supporting the Section, please. The committee has one or two ideas this year to help the day run smoothly and to make any new participants feel welcome.

For all attending BTME I look forward to catching up with friends and seeing some familiar faces again.

It just leaves me to wish you all best wishes for the year and happy greenkeeping.

Kevan Glass



South West

Happy New Year people, it's that time of year again when we all get a start afresh. How many of you have New Year's resolutions? How many of you just joined the gym, or brought yourself some new running shoes? How many

of you have just given up smoking? Started a diet? Whatever it is that you've decided to do for yourself this year, I wish you all the best and I hope that you have the determination to see it through, be strong!

We have now started to carry out some workshops with Laurence Pithie. We have also started to get some great feedback for them also. If your New Year's resolution is to continue with more education and better yourself in your profession, surely this is the perfect way to do so. Another workshop will be taking place in January, don't miss out, and book now!

The Fixture List will be with you very shortly. This year we will send them out to you via e-mail again, and this means you may need to keep me updated if I don't already have your address. This worked very well last year, also all the events will be on the southwest facebook page, in the magazines and on the BIGGA website. Really is no reason to miss an event! Just a reminder also, make it your goal to play in at least one Section team match, I know that Wayne will be waiting for your call.

This month, I promise you that I won't bore you with all that were up to at Minch. I'm sure you don't want to hear about us changing all our bunker sand on the Cherington course and making a few alterations to the ones on the Avening course - mainly reducing the larger bunkers and working towards preventing major washouts. I doubt that you want to hear about how many trees being felled this winter (approx 30 and planting around 50).

With The Ashes well underway now (while I write this we just got an incredible draw at Brisbane) it shows that England finally looks as though we could be the worlds best at something.... possibly. Well we tried at football (that was a painful summer, still hurts now). Martin Johnson and his team tried with an egg. They do all the right thing before and after a match, just struggle for the 80 minutes. But Andrew Strauss and his merry men seem to be doing everything just so. I'm going to predict that we win Down Under, 2-1...Any takers?

This month's tummy tickler: "I've just poured superglue into a non-stick pan...Somebody's going to be wrong!"

Remember that we also have our own South West Section facebook page, proving to be very useful, only for it grow as more of you become involved. If you are not a member of the page, its time you were, ask me for the link and ill happily forward it to you.

Adam Matthews



South Wales

Happy New Year! Blwyddyn Newydd Dda! Hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year and haven't put on too many pounds! Firstly, a round up of recent events.

The Annual Regional Seminar was again held at Cannington College. There was a fairly good attendance considering it was (unavoidably) held on a Friday and attendees were treated to some excellent talks on various subjects. In particular, our own Rhys Norville, of Newport GC, gave an excellent talk on his experiences in the US after winning 2009 Toro Student Greenkeeper Of The Year Award. Also a big 'Well Done' to Tony Horne, who stepped in at the last minute to give an excellent talk on the different types of sports pitches. Thanks go out to Jane Jones and Steve Chappell among others who helped to organise the event.

Also in November, the R&A, in conjunction with The Golf Union Of Wales, organised two 'Roadshow' events at Ashburnham and Greenmeadow golf clubs on the subject of sustainability. The talks centred on how to make your club more environmentally friendly, which in turn will save money without lowering standards. And, while promoting the finer grass species was mentioned, it is only a small facet of a much larger subject. Excellent presentations were given by Phillip Russell, of The R&A; Jonathan Smith, of Golf Environment Organisation, and Richard Stuttard, of The STRI. Well done to all those involved and to the aforementioned clubs for hosting the events. If they organise similar events in the future then I can wholeheartedly recommend them.

The results of the Christmas Competition will appear in February's column as the event took place after this edition went to print.

Back up to date now, and still on the subject of education, the Winter Series Of Evening Lectures has come around again. The first talk will be in January at Pencoed college, please contact Steve Chappell for the date as I haven't received it at the time of writing. Speaker for the evening will be Mark Hunt, of Headland. These evenings will again be sponsored by Countrywide Turf & Amenity, so thanks to them from the Section.

Congratulations to Andrew Mannion, of Southerndown GC, on becoming a father again, this time to little baby boy Noa Tomos. Best wishes from the Section.

Congratulations to Russia and Qatar for being chosen to hold the 2018 and 2022 football World Cups, although this didn't go down too well with an English colleague of mine! He

was especially mystified as to the thinking of the choice of Qatar as a host nation. 'Can you name a Qatar player?' He asked. I thought for a while and then said 'Eric Clapton?' He was not amused.

Finally, mystery surrounds the events of a few months ago, when a few Greenkeepers from our Section went on a golfing trip to West Wales. After a game of golf, they decided to go into the local village to have a few beers. A few hours later, suitably refreshed and in high spirits, they decided to take a short cut across a narrow bridge. Yes, you guessed it, one of them ended up in the drink, much to the amusement of his companions. To be fair, none of them has divulged as to the identity of the unlucky gentleman. So please don't throw pieces bread at him while making duck noises at the Christmas dinner as this might give the game away!

See You Soon
Ceri Richards

Chairman's Word (continued from page 12)

It is our intention to always act in the best interests of all our members.

If you have views yourself on the future of trade shows please let others know about them. Contact your local BIGGA Section committee members; let them know your opinions so that they can represent your best interests.

These fine people volunteer their time to serve you in your greenkeeping career. If you don't know who to contact, check out the Website, Magazine or contact a member of HQ staff on 01347 833800.

There is still much to be done

As mentioned before on these pages the Association we should always strive for must have:

1. A Customer Service Culture
2. The alignment of Services to Mission

3. Data Driven Strategies
4. Dialogue and Engagement with Members
5. The CEO to be a Broker of Good Ideas
6. Organisational Adaptability
7. Alliance Building.

I know that Andrew Mellon (Chairman-elect) feels that BIGGA should be at the very forefront of advancing the greenkeeping profession. He is a driven and talented individual who will do a great job as your National Chairman. I pledge my full support to him.

There is still much to be done and I hope that I can play my part in helping Andrew in every way possible during his year. I hope that you too will find your own way of taking this great profession forward.

My best wishes for a prosperous 2011.

Thanks - and regards,
Paul Worster



John Pemberton
Chief Executive

Signing off for the last time

As we move into 2011 I sit down to write what is to be my last ever column for Greenkeeper International. This time last year I was focusing on dieting and handicaps with the thought of life without BIGGA never crossing my mind. What a difference a year makes though, my weight and my handicap remain unchanged but having given my future a great deal of thought I have decided to move into semi-retirement as from the end of April and will therefore be leaving my present post with BIGGA.

I first joined the Association in March 1993 and have, in my almost 18 years, built on my previous experience as an accountant and business manager to acquire a wealth of industry specific knowledge and large database of contact details that need to be passed on to the Board and my eventual successor. In order to achieve this the Board have asked me to seek some peace and quiet and to write them what in essence will be a manual to the job of Chief Executive, incorporating as much of that knowledge that I can.

Therefore, with effect from January 4, I will not be attending the office as frequently as I have in the past and in the interim period, until a successor has been appointed, Tracey Maddison, currently Head of Membership Services, will take on the role of Acting General Manager, working with the Board, myself and the existing staff team to ensure the ongoing success of BIGGA and the continuity of the high level of service that it offers to both Members and the Industry. I will continue to be available to the Board to give advice, information and to help with special projects during my wind-down period and over the next couple of weeks I will be actively involved with the management and planning of Harrogate Week 2011.

2010 has been a difficult year for all of us but I have every confidence in the BIGGA Board and the HQ Staff for the coming year and I will be working hard behind the scenes to give them my full support. I thank you for the support that you have given both myself and the Association in the past and ask that you continue to put your weight behind BIGGA and the team at BIGGA HOUSE.

I will be attending Harrogate as usual and hope that I will see you there. After April please spare a thought for the old guy in the bright yellow suit manning the school crossing in the pouring rain ... it could be me!

Wishing everyone Good Luck and Good Fortune for 2011 and beyond. And now, signing off for the last time...

John Pemberton
Chief Executive

AGM Notice

The Annual General Meeting of BIGGA will be held on Wednesday January 19, 2011 at 5.15pm in the Queens Suite at the Harrogate International Centre.

All paperwork including the Agenda and proxy voting forms are available on the BIGGA Website in the Members' Area.

The meeting will be followed immediately by an Open Forum where members will have the opportunity to discuss matters of concern to them with the Board of Directors.