

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

Belated news is that the 2010 Christmas games day resulted in a drubbing handed out to Lundin Golf Club by the mighty Leven Links who outplayed and out drunk them with ease and who look forward to trouncing them at golf this year.

The Section intends to hold a Pairs' competition along the lines of last year's Inter Club one. However, to attract as many players as possible and not rule out people who may be the only 'golfer' at their course we propose they can form teams from different clubs. The matches are ideally home and away on a match-play basis (four ball better ball). For more details and how to enter check out the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk

Last year's Inter Club Tournament final was contested between Leven and Crieff. It has still to be completed with the score standing at 3 Holes up to Crieff and the second leg to be played at Leven. We will have hopefully held two education events (maybe three by the time you read this). Lynn Joping, of SGEG, talk was rescheduled to February 9 because of December's snow and Headland Amenity has planned a seminar on February 23. Also in the pipeline is a seminar on March 9 by Grant Moir, of the R&A Rules Office, on the Rules of Golf and how they affect greenkeeping. All events are in the Elmwood training room and our thanks go to Elmwood for providing this facility for us. We are still trying to set up a workshop/seminar on irrigation for late March and letters will be out shortly for the

Spring golf meeting which will be at Ladybank Golf Club on April 28.

Gordon Moir



West

The snow has gone and as usual is replaced with rain, what a surprise, I just hope things improve over the coming weeks. We can look on the bright side in that courses are looking good due to the lack of traffic.

As stated last month I had a fair bit of damage from snow mould so this month I will be concentrating on plugging from our putting green, the rest of the course looks great.

What's happened in the last few weeks, well nothing much, I attended Harrogate and that's about it.

During my time at Harrogate I completed a two-day workshop on management which I found has given me a new excitement for the weeks ahead, trying to implement some of the ideas passed on through the trainer, Shona Garner, who runs the two days. She exuded an enthusiasm for dealing with people and her subject which I found quite infectious, so for that I would like to thank the Duracell bunny as she is known. The two-day course was demanding and very informative and I would recommend all to have a bash.

The Exhibition and Conference I found to be excellent with a wide variety of machines, irrigation companies, construction, fertilisers, waste management and advisory services available for all to see. The seminars I attended were of an extremely high standard and gave me a few things to consider for the season. Socially, I'm sure I didn't get to see everybody, but it just amazes me how many

people you bump into and then once you start talking time just evaporates. I do apologise to Gerry for not taking photos but I didn't want to have any litigation proceedings raised against me for some of the uncompromising situations I witnessed. Only kidding folks.

I hope to report on a successful conference in the next issue of the magazine and by then I will confirm the dates of the various outings and venues.

Could members please remember that Gerry Bruen is now operating a blog for the West Section and contributions would be appreciated.

Please remember my email stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com and my numbers 0141-942-5554, or 07790 823914 for any news.

While we're on the subject, congratulations to Christian Carvel and his wife on the birth of their twins and I hope all is well as one of them required an operation recently.

Stuart Taylor



Ayrshire

Hello everyone. Hope you've managed to get some or all of your winter projects completed around the snow, ice, the big thaw, and, of course, the rain! I so hope this indicates a long hot summer for us all, or am I just being optimistic?

The spring outing this year is to be held over Prestwick St Cuthberts golf course with the date to be confirmed. Keep your eyes peeled for the postie!

By the time you receive this issue of Greenkeeper International the Scottish conference at Dunfermline will have passed. A report on this will follow in next month's issue. The conference is well supported throughout the

industry and I hope the Ayrshire Section will put in a good attendance!

Not much else to report this month other than I wish everyone the very best for a successful golfing season ahead.

Until next time, keep smiling!
Cheers.

John Mair.

Johnmair982@hotmail.co.uk
07500874449



Northern

Well, the weather seems to have passed and we can all get on with those all important jobs. Getting out on the course and doing some aeration, whether it be tees, greens or fairways, it has been a novelty with some courses so let's hope it continues.

First of all I would like to offer the Section's congratulations to a certain course up near Inverness, namely Castle Stuart Golf Club, on being awarded the Barclays Scottish Open. I'm sure Stuart McColm and Chris Haspell and all the staff at Castle Stuart will have the place looking awesome! With the likes of Phil Mickelson and Pádraig Harrington playing your course you won't need to give much of a team talk to the squad. So we look forward to the first week in July and seeing the course on the TV. Good Luck Castle Stuart and well done!

Next, we have a case of better the devil you know. My old mate, Ross, is moving back to Newmachar GC. He started there on February 7. So good luck Ross and I hope everything works out for you. I know someone who couldn't wait for you to start back. Mentioning no names, eh George Mitchell. He has really missed you Ross and let's just say he's had a wee spring in his

step since it was confirmed you were coming back. You'd better get used to those five minute jobs again. Ah bless him!

Last but not least, Hughie, Louis, Duey and Donald would like to express their thanks to Wilson Morrison of Fairways for inviting them across to Florida for the recent GCSAA Turfgrass show. If you're wondering who the aforementioned characters were then they were Dale Robertson, of Newmachar; Kenny Harper, of Meldrum House; Muir Ross, of Ballindalloch, and Robert O'Donnell, of Oldmeldrum. I'm sure you all had a terrible time over there and that you never want to go back again!

Well that's it for this month guys and girls, hope you all have a good month and I'll say it again, any information you'd like to share with the Section drop me a line on 07813 889374 or on the internet at benbrookes@yahoo.co.uk

Happy greenkeeping
Ben Brookes
Murcar Links

Northern



North Wales

I have promised that I will try my best to find a positive to start each month's column in times that can only be described as difficult, looking at a positive (no matter how small) might just help. The positives I can find this month are; the days are lengthening, more opportunity for some much needed overtime, we've nearly caught up on the winter work that got held back by all that horrible weather before Christmas and finally, for those golfers who were so bitterly disappointed by our loss of the Christmas tournament, we only have to wait another month until the spring tournament at Denbigh Golf Club and on that note the tournament will be held on April 13, entry sheets and fixture lists hopefully will have already dropped through your letter boxes, if not, don't worry they are on their way.

On February 24 John Deere dealer, Charlie's Groundcare, held a demonstration day at

Henlle Golf Club, pictures now available on Facebook group "North Wales Bigga" a big thank you goes to Henlle and especially Huw Roberts and co for their time and for giving us the venue to view the products.

On March 2 the Section will hold a seminar at Abergele Golf Club, the headline subject of the seminar is "Drug Abuse in the Soil" and with the seminar being given by Ian MacMillan we know it can only be extremely interesting. The seminar is only a half-day, being held between 11am and 3pm and I believe it counts towards CPD points. A full write up in next month's column and pictures will also be available on Facebook.

That's about it, I've lost the will to find anything else to write about so all the best until next month!

Pete Maybury mobile 07756 001187 e-mail petemayb66@aol.com

I look forward to hearing from you!



Northern

Hello everyone, hope you are all well and looking forward to the challenges of the new season. When you look at all the bad weather round the world at the moment we seem to be getting off quite lightly. It was nice to see a few familiar faces at Harrogate Week and I hope you all found something of interest, and of course, the customary bargain.

The golf events for the new season will again be £20 to enter, payable one week in advance of the event. Our first event will be held at the K.P. Club Pocklington on April 20, 1st tee 10am. I look forward to seeing many of you on the day. If you require any information on forthcoming events or have any news or gossip, please contact me F Stewart 72, West Park Grove, Roundhay, LS8 2DY. Mob:07947 401278.

Email: frankstewart3 @ hot-mail.co.uk.

Frank Stewart



North West

That's it, all the wet and white weather is now just a distant memory and the sun is shining and temperatures are steadily rising. I really hope all the previous is true, but right now during the beginning of February, here in Southport, it's very cold and worryingly wet.

The first part of our Region's activities have been arranged, and they are as follows:

Wednesday, April 13 Spring Tournament, Hesketh GC, tee 10am to 11.30am.

Thursday, June 16 North West v North Wales, Heaton Moor GC.

Wednesday, June 29 Summer Tournament, Grange Park GC, tee 2.15pm.

Wednesday July 6 North West v North Wales 20-20 cricket Ashley Cricket Club, near Altrincham 4.30pm start.

Thursday, September 29 Autumn Tournament Dunham

Forest GC tee 1.10pm.

Monday and Tuesday, October 3&4 BIGGA National Championship, West Lancashire GC.

Thursday, November 17 Bert Cross Trophy and AGM, Wilmslow GC.

For anyone not wishing to play golf on the 13th there will be a course/maintenance facility walk, please come along and support your Region. Oh well, that's it for now, as always any information is greatly appreciated.

Cheers

Peter McVicar

07885 347818 pdmv@hotmail.co.uk



Cleveland

Hi all, hope you are all fit and well, and by the time you read this your thoughts I'm sure will be on the up and coming season and back to constant grass cutting!

I hope you all enjoyed your trip to Harrogate for the BTME show,

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Around The Green

and once again Terry Charlton put on a bus for the north east lads down to the show. Although I didn't travel down on the bus I'm sure it was a good laugh and so I will thank you Terry on behalf of all those that did.

On a rather sad note, but also echoed with well wishes, we had a leaving do for Tony Mears in January at Northallerton. For those who don't know Tony, he has been the Course Manager at Dinsdale Spa Golf Club at Darlington for many years. Tony is moving from his North East roots a long, long way away to the tropical island of the Isle of Wight where he will be Course Manager at Sandown Golf Club. Tony has been a great servant to the Cleveland Section serving as Chairman, as well as being very heavily involved with the GTC. Tony is a great guy and a good friend and role model to many, and on that note I would like, on behalf of the Cleveland Section, to wish Tony and his partner all the best for the future.

Congratulations to James Taylor, who has been promoted to Course Manager at Dinsdale Spa. Good luck with your new role.

Tuesday, March 15 we have a talk taking place at Teeside GC. The Great Turf Company will be talking about "Restoring Natural Turf using Natures Methods". The talk is from Ian MacMillan and Andrew Turnbull. Ian has a wealth of greenkeeping experience and it should be a very interesting talk, so come along, as they say "every day is a school day" you never know what you may learn and pick up.

The Spring Tournament will be held at Middlesbrough (Brass Castle) GC on April 6. It's been a long time since we last had an event at Brass and there has been a lot of change to the course by John and his team over the past few years so I am looking forward to playing. I predict this one will be very popular so get in early to avoid disappointment. It will be a 9.30am tee off onwards and I am told a carvery meal afterwards. The day will be £16.50 for golf and a meal, you can't go wrong for that, and you never know, you might walk away with one of Pembo's plush prizes. Payment must be in advance of the day, please note that no money will be taken on the day and BIGGA cards MUST be produced. Cheques can be made payable to CLEVELAND

BIGGA and can be sent to Ian Pemberton, 6 Rosewood Court, Marton, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS7 8QR. You can also contact Ian on 07791695768 or Kevin on 07921817857 regarding the event.

Finally, Ian Pemberton has managed to organise a trip down the potash mine at Boulby. This has been on and off for some years now but Ian has finally got us a date. Unfortunately numbers have been limited to eight and if it is over subscribed names will be pulled out of a hat. If your name is not pulled out, guess what? You won't be going....but fear not, Pembo will try to sort another visit asap. The visit will be June 14. More info will follow

Kevin Scarce



North East

Well, as usual, no phone calls received this month but at least I do have some news for you. Recently I received a email from Tony Milan and Wayne Reid, both from Newcastle College, asking if any Head Greenkeepers or Course Managers would be interested in joining their Sports Turf Committee. Don't worry they are only likely to have one or two meetings a year and if it's like the last one it won't be during work time, so there's really no excuses if you're interested in helping them, just give them a ring.

The Section's first competition is on April 15 at Newcastle Utd GC, tee off time is 10am to 10.30am, as said last year we decided to stay central to see if we could get more people turning up so please try and attend, we seem to have lost quite a few regulars in the last couple years.

In the Autumn we are playing Longhirst Hall on September 21 as mentioned previously in the magazine this will be as a tribute to Stuart Wilson, Head Greenkeeper, who tragically lost his life last year. More news will follow about this competition a little later, again we are looking for a good turn out.

Just received some late news from my sports' reporter which is centered around the Toon-Mackem derby return

game. After the 5-1 demolition of Sunderland last time revenge threats were all around but in reality they never came close to materialising. Mackem nemesis, Nolan, opened the scoring and it was only a flukey 96th minute equaliser that saved the red and white blushes. Against an under-strength Toon side that late, late leveller avoided the dreaded derby day double over the Mackems but their fans were again big enough to admit they were second best by a long chalk. Still following on from that was more transfer window asset stripping by the Toon owner showing a total lack of ambition except for his pockets, it's no wonder the Black and Whites have to be a hardy lot with decisions like that, hopefully some golf news will be filtering through soon with the season's start drawing closer.

Jimmy Richardson



Sheffield

Hello everyone,

So, we reach that time of year again when the hard work starts preparing the course for the season ahead. We will all be coming to the end of our winter programmes and will be desperately hoping the weather is on our side for the Spring.

On February 1st we held our winter lecture at Rotherham GC. Firstly I must thank Rebecca Turner, from Sherriff Amenity, for her help organising the day. We had two fantastic speakers. Dr Ruth Mann, of STRI, gave a very insightful talk on integrated fungicide programmes and Clive Heginbotham, of Sherriff Amenity, spoke on application technology. I'm sure those who attended (which wasn't many again - out of the 54 letters I sent out we had 17 greenkeepers turn up) would agree that both lectures were very interesting and left members with something to think about going away.

I am busy at the moment trying to organise a Spring lecture for the Section. I will inform people further when final details have been organised.

This seasons golf competitions are almost finalised and you will be receiving a fixture

card shortly.

I'm sure many of you out there face the constant battle against the dreaded mole on the course and have the nightmare of trying to catch the little buggers. It seems that our Competition Secretary, Andy Unwin, is having a real battle of his own with the moles at the moment. So much so that one of his colleagues decided to write this short poem about Andy's struggles.

A MOLE IN ONE, OR PERHAPS NOT A MOLE IN THE HOLE

BY ED

Andy Unwin, it's sad to say
Thought he could drive the moles away

He tried to use a metal trap
But unfortunately found he was c..p

Not to be outdone
He then tried gas
The moles were having
A damn good laugh

Molehills here,
Molehills there
The bloody things
Were everywhere

"Enough, Enough"
Dave did say,
"A Professional
Is on his way"

He came in, the job was done
And as for Andy
What a shame
He will never hunt moles again.

I hope March is a good one for you all and I will speak to you all soon.

Regards
James Stevens
jimthegreenkeeper@hotmail.com

Midland



East Midland

Hello all,

I was planning on starting this month's write up with some funny stories from around the Section but unfortunately the news flow seems to have slowed over the winter months so I am not left with much other than a

story about poor timing.

A few weeks ago me and the lads were carrying out some tree work and were burning the top branches in our yard, (sorry all you greens, but it was cold) when I was caught by the owner of a home on the other side of the lane, he angrily informed me that the area was a smoke controlled zone. I apologised profusely as I was never aware of this, but I pointed out that there was hardly any smoke, when at that precise time the lads put on the branches from an evergreen! "You call that hardly any smoke?" said the neighbour, angrily making me turn to face the huge plumes of smoke billowing towards us and his home. Oops you can't beat that for bad timing!

Back to Section news now, and if you haven't already you should soon have your fixture cards for the Section's golfing events this year. This year we have five events along with the Annual Pairs' comp. Our events are to be held at: Cotgrave, Cavendish, Forest Hill and Lingdale with a special par 3 competition and BBQ at Nailcote Hall. All the events are to be at a cost of £17 and the Pairs' competition priced at £10 per pair, these events are great opportunities to meet people within our profession and make new friends. The courses we are playing at are some of the best in the area, and certainly the summer competition is worth the journey up to Cavendish (if we have lost the snow by then) for the views alone.

On an educational side of things Greg Skinner has organised a Talunex training course at Forest Hill GC in March. Places may still be available so please contact Greg or AndyDeWet if you are interested. We are also hoping to run the popular pesticide update course over the coming months, this is a vital course that should not be missed, watch the bulletin boards and the section notes for further details.

Finally, we would like to hear from anyone interested in helping out on the committee, or if you don't fancy that then we are always looking for ideas on things we can do and how we may be able to improve the event we put on for you all within the East Midlands Section. Anyone with any news or stories or that is interested in helping out or

that has any ideas for your Section should contact myself at pds1@btinternet.co or Andy de Wet at biggaeastmidlands@hotmail.com

Pete Smith



East of England

To begin with, congratulations to all at BIGGA for another successful Harrogate Show. Suddenly the summer seems a whole lot closer! Also all the best to John Pemberton on his retirement.

Our next golf day is the revised Christmas fixture at Sleaford Golf Club on Thursday, March 10, tee off at 11am. The "bring and win" Christmas present part has been shelved though! Please contact Bruce Hicks to book your place.

Our annual seminar this year is being held in conjunction with the Midland Region. It is on Wednesday, March 30, at Newark Golf Club beginning at 9am. The day involves talks from Mark Hunt, of Headland Amenity, Dr Keith Duff, Golf Environment Consultant, and Ben Taylor of Bernhard & Co. The day will cost £14 and includes lunch. Full details will be sent to everyone, however anyone interested in attending should contact Peter Larter our Regional Administrator.

Our first two golf days for this year have been booked. They are: Immingham Golf Club on Wednesday, May 2, and Stoke Rochford Golf Club on Thursday, July 28. Tee off for both is 1pm. Everyone is welcome for what is always an enjoyable day of golf and banter. Again Bruce Hicks should be contacted by anyone interested in playing.

Many thanks.

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club.



Midland

I would like to start this month's notes by thanking our Chair, Ed, for composing Feb's words of wisdom. Such was due

to the fact that my old steam powered computer finally ran out of coal. I suppose that after 12 years of service one cannot complain. I have indeed experienced, and heard of irrigation systems that have not given unproblematic service for so long! On that note the Section thanks Osprey Irrigation for sponsoring this month's fine calendar page. Please consider them for your water management and distribution needs: www.ospreywmg.com <<http://www.ospreywmg.com>> .

The Section also would like to thank our old friends Headland Amenity for sponsoring this year's fixture list/programme card for 2011. Please support your Section by attending as many of the year's events as possible.

I'm afraid that's all I have for this month.

Sean McDade

South East



Sussex

Well, what wonderful weather we had for our Turkey Trot at Worthing Golf Club. Wind and rain almost non-stop! But that didn't stop some 50 competitors braving the elements and thanks to George and his staff, the course was in great condition. The results are: 1. Derek Farrington, Peter Day, Jane Northeast and John Robson; 2. Dave Allen, Simon Wells, Richard Evans and Josh Kelly; 3. Eric Green, Glynn Pollard, Brian Vitler and Jim Russell; 4. George Barr, Bob Watters, Ian Potter and Chris Watters. Of course, we had the Christmas raffle where everyone wins a prize. We thank Worthing Golf Club for once again hosting the event.

Dave Allen presented the Sussex Bowl to Eric Green and Glynn Pollard. We would certainly like to see more entries this year for this wonderful trophy. Thanks must go to Darren Mitchell, of Mitchell's Ground Care for sponsoring the event, providing the beautiful cut glass trophy and for losing to me and Glynn in the final.

Anyone with any news for

the Section please contact me on TheGreens837@aol.com or 01424-214600.

Cheers!
Eric Green



Surrey

This month's report will be factual and have no mention of irrelevant information as in the past. I have decided that details of my holidays and brief trips to a certain island just to the south of Portsmouth may not be of particular interest to a small number of readers of this excellent monthly publication and therefore in future I shall write only about your news and hobbies. This may prove less humorous but after reading our Chairman's report at the AGM I feel obliged to refrain from being frivolous and selfish as in my usual jottings and become a more professional reporter of the Surrey greenkeeping world.

Ron Christie has text me this year's golf programme and it is as follows. Team competition, at Epsom GC, March 31; Spring Tournament, at Mitcham GC, May 10. Cresta Cup, at Surrey Downs GC, June 8; McMillan Tankard, at Sunningdale GC, August 15; Turkey Trot, at Han-kley Common December 6.

News of other events, seminars etc will appear when known. Ronnie also told me about his local painter and decorator. Although 84, he is still working full time at the golf club. He can paint walls and ceilings and frequently stains floors, but at 84 this is understandable. This is the sort of news and local interest I require to fulfill my new style 'Around the Green' so come on chaps and gals keep me informed.

Gareth Roberts is 50 this year, I know he doesn't look it but the years have not been kind. Although he will reach his half-century he still moves with the grace of a Celtic sword dancer and to prove he can still do it he and two friends, also at this grand old age, will attempt to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in two weeks time in aid of autistic children. If you would like to help, contact the charity at www.helpautistic-children.co.uk <<http://www.helpautistic-children.co.uk>> or

send a donation direct to Gareth at: The Bungalow, Hankley Common GC, Tilford Farnham, Surrey, GU10 2DD made payable to Autistic Children.

I look forward to receiving your comments on this my first endeavour into the more serious realms of journalism and hope that you all will help by letting me know of your own or your workmates' unusual hobbies and pastimes. Only the unusual please. Train, plane and bird watching, running, swimming, football, cricket, rugby etc will not be used unless attached to a £20 note and photography, ice skating and Morris dancing require rather more.

Sorry that's all for this month otherwise I will be late for my class at the local night school on 'Nudism Uncovered'

Brian Willmott



Essex

At long last we managed to get our 2010 AGM and Christmas Team Event on the road. Held on January 27 at The Essex Golf & Country Club. 60+ competitors faced the starter for a shotgun start in teams of four. The format was progressive Stableford.

The day started cold but dry, until a few small flurries of snow started to fall, not enough to settle and cover the ground though. Visions of the heavy snow conditions, when our event was originally scheduled to be held back at the beginning of December, shot through my mind but all was well in the end.

The course was in superb condition after the atrocious weather we have had of late and the greens and fairways were the best I've seen at this time of the year. Dry and firm, though on the odd occasion the rough was a bit on the damp side. Still I shouldn't have been that wide in the first place. We were back in the warm after just over four hours.

The day's proceedings kicked off with our AGM at 8.30am. Over 28 members attended and Chairman Mark Stopps ran us through last year's accounts and the season's report. The election to the post of Education Officer was taken by Ian Wood

from Romford Golf Club. Thanks were given to Paul O'Kane for his time in the position. The election to the committee of a new position was that of Neil Peachey (P. Tuckwell Ltd) as sponsor's representative. (This position was on nomination and vote from the sponsors of our Section and had no member involvement). We welcome Neil to the committee and hope he enjoys his time with us. The position of Chairman was also up for election. Mark Stopps was willing to stand again for a further year and being unopposed he was duly elected. Well done Mark and keep up the good work. Mark thanked all the 2010 sponsors for their support and hoped that they would continue to support the section during the coming year.

A full transcript of the AGM report can be viewed on our website.

Now to the golf;

Before we got the day's awards for the Team Event underway, The Essex Club Captain, Glen Swift presented the trophies to the 2010 season winners.

Spring Trophy, Antony Kirwan; Summer Trophy, Ben Scrivener; Essex Trophy, Steve Cousins; Autumn Trophy, Steve Cousins; Golfer of the Year, Mark Stopps; Trade Golfer of the Year, Neil Peachey and Essex Pairs Knockout Trophy, Dougie Fernie & Bill Maynard.

Captain, Glen Swift then presented the awards for the day.

Christmas (January) Team Event. 1. Stoke by Nayland, Liam Springett, Laurence Gibson, Liam Close, Simon Bartram. 120 pts; 2. Abridge Golf Club - Ben Scrivener, Geoff Smith, Richard Hare, Steve Crossdale. 116 pts C/B; 3. Channels Golf Club - Malcolm Smith, Richard Dunmow, Neil Tuton, Michael Bartlett. 116 pts.

Nearest the Pin 5th Hole: Andy Turbin. Nearest the Pin 11th Hole: Michael Bartlett.

Mark Stopps thanked The Essex Golf & Country Club for supporting Essex BIGGA and allowing us to use the course for the day. A special thanks to Course Manager, Martin Forrester and his staff for the condition of the course and all their hard work in presenting it in such a fine state. Finally to Jeremy and the catering staff for their hospitality, and the excellent meal we enjoyed.

We wish to thank the spon-

sors and trade representatives who supported our raffle table.

Education: On the education front; we are running a series of One day First Aid courses, the first of which is being held at The Burstead Golf Club, Tuesday, March 15. These courses are covering basic First Aid, this is a good opener for staff who need the basic principals of First Aid, plus you will receive three CPD points on completion of the day. We are keeping the cost to a minimum by subsidising the day. A buffet lunch will be included. If you are interested please contact Ian Wood by email: ian.wood@romfordgolfclub.co.uk

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

The new fixture book will be out mid March and entry forms will be available in this book, they are also available for download from the website.

Football: Do you fancy a game of football against the Sussex Section on the Monday, May 23? It will be a 2pm kick off, 45 minutes each way with a buffet lunch after the game. We are looking for around 15 players to make up the team. If you are interested please contact Mark Stopps; mark@bentleygolfclub.co.uk

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

Arnold Phipps-Jones

South West and South Wales



South Coast

Hello and welcome to all our South Coast members, at the time of writing this report the snows of December seem a distant memory thank goodness. Here at the Army GC we were only open for nine days in December and I believe other clubs were worse off than us. The current weather has now allowed us to get on with the usual aeration

work to the course as well as completing some outstanding construction work on Tees and Bunkers. We are hosting the County Championships in June so that is something I'm looking forward to this year.

News from around the Section is scarce but I have been informed that Bill Garner, from Parkstone GC, has left his post at the end of January. Bill has been with us a long time and we lose another good greenkeeper so I wish him well with whatever path he chooses to take.

Also heard that Rob, at Remedy Oak GC, is looking for seasonal staff this year. So give him a call.

Congratulations must go to the organisers within BIGGA of Harrogate Week which considering the current climate I felt was a success. The educational programme was varied and I have only heard positive feedback from the large contingent of our Section members who attended.

The Section seminar which is usually held in March has been put back to the end of October, the date of which is yet to be confirmed. There were a number of reasons for the postponement but we believe by moving it we will be able to offer an attractive venue at Milton Abbey private school and some quality speakers for you to enjoy a good day out. Also as part of the day Joe Cooper has offered to take you on a tour of his estate where you will be able to see the diverse range of work that he undertakes, from sports pitches to the farm where the pigs are kept and eventually end up on the menu.

Jon Worrall, from Barton on Sea GC, is running our Facebook page so please send him any photos, news etc. that you may have to biggasouthcoast@hotmail.co.uk where he will publish them. We currently have 40 members signed up on there so please support his efforts.

Our first golfing event kicks off at Liphook GC on May 19, details of which will appear in this section next month along with all the other venues and dates.

Finally, good luck with the season ahead, it's going to be tough but expectations will still be the same.

Phil Wentworth



Devon and Cornwall

Hello all! Our January meeting was held at Newquay Golf Club on Wednesday, January 12. A wild, wet and windy day, braved by 50 strong attendees enjoying either a course walk or golf in these trying conditions. Newquay GC is a great links course with a fantastic vista of the world famous Fistral beach from all 18 holes.

Even with, at times heavy rain, the course held up very well and it was a great testament to Andrew Dunstan, Course Manager, and his team. Andrew led the brave course walkers around the course, explaining the trials and tribulations of managing a course situated adjacent to one of the busiest resort town centres in the country. Andrew adopts a sustainable approach, encouraging fescue back into the swards with good success. The course walk ended with the shelter of the Maintenance facilities and then a quick sprint to the clubhouse. For the very brave (I could think of other words!) golfers, who managed 18 holes playing a medal off the blue tees, the reward was a place at this year's national tournament at West Lancashire GC in October funded by the section. On the day, the winners were, 1. Gordon Tamblin, Mullion GC, nett 75; 2. Gavin Moore, Launceston GC, nett 77; 3. Mark Tucker, Saunton GC, nett 80. Nearest the Pin went to Gordon Tamblin and Longest Drive went to Greg O'Reilly, St Mellion.

The qualifiers for the National Championship were Gordon Tamblin (Handicap category 0-5), Gavin Moore (6-12) and David Daw, Porthpean GC (13-24). Congratulations to all those who won prizes and to all attendees who made the effort to make the journey and brave the conditions.

Sponsors for the day were Barenbrug and Reel grinding South West. David Singleton presented prizes on behalf of Barenbrug and Gary Tucker, of Reel Grinding SW, presented prizes for Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive. Many thanks to our two sponsors for the day for

your continued support of the Section.

The afternoon educational presentation was given by Josh Webber BSc Hons, Portmore Park. His topic was "A Practical Approach to Biological Management". Josh stepped in at the last moment to deliver the presentation and showed a great deal of passion, enthusiasm and knowledge towards this particular subject. Josh has only just finished his degree at Myerscough and has been instrumental in adopting policies and sound ecological principles at Portmore Park, winner of this year's STRI Environment Award! Many thanks to Josh for having the courage to step in and deliver a very professional presentation in front of an experienced audience. Many thanks to Newquay Golf Club for the kind hospitality on the day.

Speaking of accolades, I would like to congratulate all Devon and Cornwall members who were recognised at this year's awards at Harrogate. The Section would like to extend our congratulations to our very own Chairman Colin Webber and the team at Portmore Park for the huge and very much deserved achievement of winning this year's STRI Environment Award. The work that has been carried out over the year's at Portmore is an inspiration to us all and just shows what can be achieved. Colin should be very proud of his achievements, following in the footsteps of St Andrews who won the same award in 2010! Well done, Colin! Also, congratulations to Gordon Child who received the BIGGA "Life Time Achievement Award". Gordon has had an illustrious career in greenkeeping. Working at Royal Birkdale and managing top courses such as St George's Hill and Moor Park where he prepared for many European Tour Events. We know Gordon best in this Region for his involvement with Churston GC and his involvement with BIGGA as National Chairman. Gordon is a very keen golfer having played in two Open Championships in 1960 and 1965. Gordon is still a regular supporter of our Section, competing in and winning recent events. I know that Gordon is highly regarded by the Section and I would like to pass on our congratulations to Gordon and his family for receiving this prestigious award! Leading the way

too is Richard Whyman, Burnham and Berrow, by receiving his "Continuous Professional Development 2nd Diploma", 10 years of achieving 10 CPD points or more, well done.

Congratulations to both Billy and John Mitchell of Perranporth GC on being awarded Hon Life Memberships of Bigga for services to the Section and the Industry. John is due to retire this year and Billy plans to follow in 2012 after 50 years service. Billy has been at the forefront of BIGGA in the South West and is often first in leading with new ideas and approaches available to the industry. Both members are still actively involved with the Section and are held in very high regard amongst all the members both regionally and nationally. This is a very much-deserved tribute to services to the section and the industry, well done Billy and John!

To all those who attended Harrogate this year, thanks for making the journey and supporting what was a very successful and positive show. The Continue to learn programme experienced records numbers and was a huge success. The general vibewas very positive. Thanks to Scott Gibson and Keith Kemp for arranging and driving the Minibus, also to Famura for sponsoring the bus and the "refreshments" and to Sports Metals for sponsoring the diesel.

Finally, this is a time to support and drive the Association and the industry forward, the easy thing to do is to sit back and pinpoint the negatives. The more positive approach for us all is to roll up our sleeves and get stuck into supporting the Section, coming up with new ideas for training and education and create an invaluable network of associates we can all benefit from.

Please contact me with any news you would like to be included in these notes.

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South Wales

Not too much to report this month as news coming to me

regarding the section is a bit thin on the ground. As I write, the weather during February is fairly mild, giving Greenkeepers a chance to stimulate a little growth on the greens which is invaluable as club competitions seem to start earlier every year and winter leagues finishing later!

As far as the evening lectures are concerned I would like to thank the speaker for February's talk, which I believe was probably Simon Barnaby from the mighty Scotts Company. Thank you Simon!

I say 'probably', as I have had no correspondence with the sponsors on this subject, but I'm sure I would have a 'phone call if I fail to mention them. Phones can be used for so much more than taking pictures of Tiger Woods so consider yourselves told off.

The Speaker for March is Mr Jim McKenzie who will give a talk on events at last year's Ryder Cup. Obviously a talk not to be missed so please try to make it. This talk will be at Pencoed College on Wednesday 16th of March at 7pm. Thank you Jim for giving me this information!

There was concern that there was a lack of refreshments at some of these events so Steve Chappell was charged with the task of finding another venue. The good news is that he has found a place that gives free tea and biscuits! The downside is that we will all have to give blood! I think we'll stick to Pencoed mate!

On the social front, the South Wales IOG Dinner and Dance will be held at The Swalec Stadium on Friday April 22nd always a great event. If you would like to go then give Steve Chappell or myself a call. The Australian Prime Minister, Mrs Julia Gillard sends her apologies but I am assured that Peter Gillard will be there!

Finally, in the news it is reported that both West Ham Utd and Tottenham Hotspur would like to have the Olympic stadium as their home ground after the Olympics. West Ham want to keep the stadium as it is, but Tottenham want to tear it down and build another! They are not even going to use a demolition company, they will just organise a friendly against Scotland instead! Or is that just a vicious rumour, Scott?

See You Soon, Ceri Richards