



## Essex

Another month has passed us by and yet again a change in the weather.

Antony Kirwan and I travelled down to Royal St George's to join the Open Championship Support Team in the middle of July. A five day trip of long, hard, wet and warm very enjoyable days. Antony was lucky enough to get a round with the overall winner Darren Clarke, plus sample the delights of an early morning out on the course with the course staff doing the normal pre-completion course preparation. Both of us had a fantastic time, met new friends, renewed old acquaintances and learnt a lot. We would both recommend the experience to anyone who has the time to spare.

I am sorry to have to report that our Secretary, Dominic Rodgers, has decided to resign from the position; the committee accepted his resignation at the last committee meeting held in July and have written and thanked him for all he has done for the Section, over the past couple of years.

At that meeting we discussed the forthcoming Regional Conference being held by our Section in November. We have written to a number of speakers and await the outcome of these preliminary enquiries. I hope to be able to make an announcement in next month's magazine of the full itinerary.

The Summer Trophy at Chelmsford will have passed when you read this but don't forget to enter the next event at Langdon Hills Golf & Country Club. Thursday, September 29. It is our Autumn Trophy.

Entries to Andy Cracknell please by Sunday, September 25.

Sorry it's short and sweet this month but there is not that much to report.

If you have anything for inclusion in Greenkeeper International or on the Section's Website [www.essexbigga.co.uk](http://www.essexbigga.co.uk) please contact me on 07764-862.337 or at [essexbigga@talktalk.net](mailto:essexbigga@talktalk.net)  
Arnold Phipps-Jones



## Kent

I must start this report by giving full plaudits to the fantastic work done by all who staged a fantastic Open Championship in our fair county in July. The course was applauded by everybody, including the players, and proved that the whole Open experience is one we should all be proud of. As for the eventual winner, I think the whole world would salute Darren Clarke for overcoming the adversity he went through in recent years to triumph in an emotionally charged championship.

I would like to add some notes from Steve Thompson, of Bearsted Golf Club, who was one of the many gallant volunteers for the event.

I thought I would drop you a few lines regarding my experiences at the Open. This was the first time that I had done any match raking and I enjoyed it immensely. I found the whole experience absolutely awesome, from meeting all the other greenkeepers on the Support Team, to being between the ropes with some of the world's top golf professionals.

Thursday - I raked two bunkers for Graeme McDowell, Jason Day, and Bubba Watson.

Friday - I helped my Pod prepare the bunkers for the day's play. Later I raked eight bunkers for Charley Hoffman, Gregory Havret, and Markus Brier. Saturday - I raked three bunkers for Steve Stricker and Webb Simpson. Sunday - Unfortunately, I didn't get selected to match rake on the final day.

My greatest memory was following Graeme McDowell's group between the three grandstands at the 18th green and hearing the thunderous applause. Seeing the sunrise over the empty grandstands early on Friday morning will also stick in my mind.

I'd like to thank - Scott MacCallum, Rachael Duffy and everyone at BIGGA for allowing me such a fantastic opportunity, Graham Royden and the greenkeeping team at Royal St. George's, and all the members

of the BIGGA Open Support Team, especially Billy McMillan and the rest of the Green Pod.

Steve Thompson, Bearsted Golf Club.

Lastly, please don't forget our next event at Sittingbourne GC on September 26. Please see website for all the details. We shall also be playing the final of our Pairs' Knockout competition on the day. Well done to all who played in this event in its inaugural year for making it such fun and well done to our finalists.

Please feel free to drop me a line with any news, views or comments as usual. Hope to see as many of you as possible at Sittingbourne.

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## Surrey

Gavin Kyle, yes the good looking and now lucky one from Knoll Park GC, has won a new set of golf clubs, bag, new putter of his choice and full custom fitting in a competition on some obscure radio station answering questions on golf. His old set of clubs are to be sold on 'E Bay' with a reserve price of £5 and his application to join 'Mensa' is in the post.

Dave Johnson, Head Greenkeeper at New Zealand GC, is well known to most Surrey members for he has worked there, man and boy, for the past 37 years. I understand that he has decided to take early retirement from the club but will still continue to live locally and offer his gardening and other skills to the residents of West Byfleet and surrounds. Good luck and a long and happy semi-retirement from us all.

Brian Turner arrived here 65 years ago plus 1 day. As an OAP, he will receive in this short paragraph only the respect that he and other OAPs in this era deserve. They are collectively called the 'baby-boomers' and have lived with ration cards, Muffin the Mule, the Cold War, the three day week, Mrs Thatcher, the onset of mobile phones the size of suitcases - and Tiger Woods.

## Assistant Profile

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



**Name:** Sam Evans  
**Age:** 22  
**Club:** Heythrop Park Resort  
**Position:** Assistant  
**Nickname:** Sambo

**1. How long have you been greenkeeping?**  
Three years

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

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

**4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?**  
Topdressing by hand because it is hard work

**5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?**  
Rough mowing because it is boring

**6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot?**  
More courses and further education

**7. Hobbies?**  
Cricket, Fishing and Rugby

**8. Favourite Band?**  
The Overtones

**9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?**  
Swindon Town FC.

**10. What is your claim to fame?**  
Chatting to Rob Andrew and Sean Fitzpatrick on the 8th tee, regarding their shots, club selection and the course in general.