

David Moulding, Stewart Kent and Robert Hamley. After the golf and course walk, Mick Higgins and Jonathan Skelton, from Sibelco, gave a very interesting educational talk on sands used for sports turf. Mick concentrated on matching particle size distribution and also showed some products which the company have been involved with in recent years.

Many thanks to Graham and his team, and all the staff at Bigbury GC, for their hospitality. Also, Big thanks to the sponsors for the day, Masons Kings and Reel Grinding SW, Gary Tucker, for providing the prizes and sponsoring the day.

On Tuesday, March 6, we held our annual Spring Seminar at St Mellion International, Cornwall. The day was organised by the Section but special thanks goes to Mike Bush MG, who did the majority of the organising of the day, along with his staff at St Mellion.

The day consisted of a round robin of machinery and technique demonstrations in the morning, followed by lunch and then two educational presentations in the afternoon. The topic for the day was "Working the Surface, looking at techniques to improve surface performance. The morning demonstrations included looking at the Graden pedestrian Sand Injection scarifier, the Blec tractor mounted sand fill scarifier, the Campey Vredo overseeder, the Dakota spinner dresser, the new Greentek units including over-seeding and hollow-coring units and the Smith-Co turf iron.

One of the demonstrations included Steve Gingell, STRI, who set up a mini trial on the putting green to establish the relationship between heights of cut, frequency of cut and the use of a turf iron and their effects on green speed. It was interesting to note that increased speed was recorded where a single cut at 5mm followed by using a turf iron as opposed to double cuts or cutting at 4.5mm. The two presentations started with Mike Bush MG, Course Manager, St Mellion, talking through dealing with the thatch problems and reducing the inputs over the years to the strong position they are in now. Steve Gingell summed up the day by looking at the areas covered in the demonstrations, concentrating on thatch and Organic Matter

control and how these areas can influence over-seeding success rates. Thanks to the 75 attendees who attended the day including Level 2 and 3 students from Duchy College. Thanks also to David Chammings and Sherriff Amenity for sponsoring the food for the day. Thanks to Mike Bush and St Mellion for staging the event; a very successful day all round!

Our next meeting will be at Borringdon Park, Plymouth (date to be confirmed, and is likely to be last wed in May!). This will be an afternoon kick off and the qualifier for the National Championship. We also have meeting at Launceston GC on July 4, Devon V Cornwall team Event. This too will be an afternoon event.

I hope you all have a great season and look forward to catching up with you all in the summer,

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South Wales

Good Morning South Wales, with our Nation at a standstill, our great rugby team on the brink of another GRAND SLAM, time to give the French Rugby Union what they deserve on the pitch after the travesty of the World Cup. A huge congratulation must go out to Lee Evans and his staff at the Millennium Stadium, the pitch has been outstanding this season good luck for the rest of the year and enjoy the matches during the Olympic games.

Our spring seminar will again take place on April 19 at The Royal Porthcawl GC, from what I'm led to believe Gerald Orme has been trying to pull out all the stops this year to ensure we have fantastic guest speakers all to be confirmed. Many thanks to him and his team at Farmura Environmental for their continued sponsorship and support for this event. For booking please contact Gareth Knight on 07595988512.

Keep enjoying the spring guys remember any news or views contact me at any time,

Peter Holmstrom



Jim Croxton
Chief Executive

A recurring theme on BIGGA's Bulletin Boards and in my conversations with members is the importance of the relationship between the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper and the Golf Club Manager/Secretary.

It is too simplistic to say that when this relationship is good the course is automatically likewise but I'm certain that it can be a contributing factor. I was delighted therefore to be asked by the Scottish Golf Union to attend its innovative Management Development Programme recently. The SGU has identified Club Manager education as a high priority for the on-going health of the game and is offering the opportunity for current and aspiring Club Managers to undertake the CMAE Certified Club Manager (CCM) course at heavily subsidised rates.

The first week of the course is an introduction to the key elements to the job and it is gratifying that BIGGA has been asked to present on the importance of golf course maintenance, how the Association can help and how to get the best out of the course manager. I'm convinced that if the next generation of Club Managers place appropriate value on the skills of our members the game of golf has a healthy future, the SGU is to be commended on its initiative.

The ability to adapt to changing weather, economic forces and golfer expectations has been vital

Another regular discussion topic has been the variety of weather conditions our members deal with across the UK and beyond. A recent Bulletin Board thread on rainfall statistics revealed huge discrepancies in rainfall levels even within relatively short distances. I have been constantly amazed by the resourcefulness of BIGGA members in dealing with all that Mother Nature challenges them with.

In some areas we have drought orders and hosepipe bans being applied from April while in others golf courses are still dealing with the after effects of severe flooding. This is when the renowned adaptability of greenkeepers comes to the fore. I've heard it said that this trait is a curse as it means that occasionally our members are taken advantage of, but there is no doubt that the ability to adapt to changing weather, economic forces and golfer expectations has been vital in surviving the last few years. We at BIGGA HOUSE are doing all we can to ensure the golf industry recognises that.

Finally it was a pleasure recently to attend the Scottish Regional Conference, which was once again expertly organised by Peter Boyd, the Regional Administrator. During the excellent conference, Stuart Taylor, Regional Chairman, presented a gift to Peter to commemorate his forthcoming retirement after 15 years excellent service. It was clear that Peter will be sorely missed by the many friends he has made in the Region and I would like to place on record my gratitude for his hard work and professionalism during the last 15 years and his support during my time with the Association.

Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO