

Section Notes

Please email your notes to steve.castle@bigga.co.uk by the 15th

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



SCOTLAND



Central

Very little news to report from the Central section this month. We had a full compliment of attendees on the irrigation design seminar in December and the feedback was positive. Thanks to Adrian Mortram for presenting this. If you haven't received an email about this year's Pairs competition yet, it will be with you shortly. Providing entries are around the same number then the format will be similar to the past two years. Entries for the spring outing at Carnoustie Burnside on Wed 17 April will be with you by the end of March. If you don't receive emails from me on these matters then please check we have your correct email address or get in touch and let me know. Both entry forms will appear on our website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk or join us on Facebook. We have no educational events confirmed at the time of going to press but still hope to fix something up before the start of the season.

Congratulations to John Watson CM at Downfield GC who has just become a father. If anyone has any news they would like to share or suggestions of educational events we could run then please let some of your committee know.
Gordon Moir



North

On behalf of the committee we hope everybody got through January ok and got back into

the swing of things after the holidays. The months just seem to fly by now and it won't be long for some of us before the season starts. Paul Sharp will soon be sending out the 200 club tickets so hopefully you will buy your own and maybe a few more and send the money back before the first outing. The two outings this year are now confirmed and we will be at Duff House Royal Golf Club on Thursday 25 April and then Edzell Golf Club on Tuesday 24 September. The Scottish Conference this year is on Tuesday 5 March so hopefully we will see a good turn out from the North Section as it is very worthwhile attending. Robert would like to add that his colleagues have been very busy working on the 18th green at Royal Aberdeen as it has been completely rebuilt and the surrounds re-shaped. Robert added that this is part of an ongoing programme to rebuild 7 greens at the club over the next 4 years. The committee was wondering if any members have any pictures of last month's terrible flooding, if they would like to forward some pictures we could put them in the magazine. Well that is the news again as things are still a bit quiet in the section but if any member has any news big or small please get in touch with Robert Patterson mob 07931639548 or Dale Robertson mob 07784517534.



East

Not much on the go within the section this month, as I write this report the snow is lying on the ground again, but I am sure the spring is just around the corner?! The section had a social night out over the festive period in Edinburgh with all welcome, we had a low turnout

but we hope to up the numbers next time and get a good catch up going. The Open Support team should be notified over the next month, so good luck to all who have put their services forward from the sections, if any members of the East section are lucky enough to be selected could you please get in touch if you are interested in doing a daily blog etc. of the experience. The section has looked into the option of putting a bus on for our spring golf outing being held at Seahouses on 23 April, please can all who are interested in travelling with the bus contact myself or our section secretary to register your interest and we can get it booked if required. A reminder also that if any members have educational topics they wish to see being set up or have any other opinions on what they think the section could offer them then please drop me a line. As I finish of this report spare a thought for poor Rory McIlroy and his new club deal with Nike \$120m, do you think he is taking a chance with this change or do you think he will tame the Tiger? Go Rors bring it home for the East Section.

Scott Corrigan
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West

New year greetings to all and hopefully we have all been busy making the course playable for the keen golfers who were unable to play for so long due to the wetness and frost conditions over the festive period.

There is not a lot happening at present except preparing things for the start of next year. I should bring to your attention the Scottish Conference to be held once again at Dunfermline

on 5 March, some excellent speakers have been found so I would recommend attending. Cost will be £35 per ticket with lunch included as usual.

Spring outing will be held at Buchanan golf club and the date is sometime in May, hopefully not when I'm in Turkey playing golf. The Autumn outing is planned for September with a date still to be set but the venue will be Eastwood Golf Club.

The site visit for Loch Lomond which was cancelled back in November will be rescheduled for February or March so please contact David McBride to book your place.

A couple of congratulations to be handed out, firstly to Graham O'Connor who moves from Symbio to take up the position of Scotland area manager for Farmura and secondly to Kerr Hunter from Gleddoch who moves into that vacant position at Symbio, the west section would like to wish both every success in their future roles.

The Section would also like to pass on their best wishes for the future happiness of Alex Cruickshank and his new wife Angela who recently tied the knot, may you both have many years of happiness together.

And last but not least, I will report on how things went at BTME in the March issue, but until then I hope everybody has a good start to the year and keep well.

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

The next west section committee meeting is 18th February should any member have a relevant question then please supply this by that date.

Thanks again
Stuart Taylor

NORTHERN



North East

As I'm writing this section news there's some large snowflakes falling. Once upon a time I used to enjoy this white stuff but now prefer it on a Christmas card. At least I don't have to work in it now - that's one of the bonuses when you're retired!

I see in January's magazine that James Parker, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Close House, has been chosen to go to

Bernhards trip to San Diego - now that is a once in a lifetime experience. I remember when I was chosen for the very first one to Vancouver way back in 2001, the amount of people you meet and courses you visit is

Tremendous - have a good time James - mind you your weather will be warmer than ours was.

Membership is slightly improving mainly due to myself and the Regional Administrator Sandra Raper making a few calls last summer in Alnwick and beyond. Further visits are planned in the early part of the year south of the Tyne. These are not just about membership, they're about the benefits you get and believe me there are lots.

I often wonder whether members read all of the magazine, we all look at the recruitment pages, but do many read the Greenkeepers Training Committee page? The monthly update from David Golding, GTC Education Director recently addressed the 'old chestnut' of why clubs looking to save money do so by reducing or withdrawing any staff training. His November article addressed this and is well worth a read - he mentions how training can be a tremendous morale booster for an individual and additional skills and knowledge will always contribute to a team's performance thereby adding productivity to the business - well said.

Golf competitions for this year are at Heworth GC on April 17 and at Westerhope GC on October 9, members will be informed in due course of tee off times.

Finally by the time you have read this BTME will be

Over. I hope many of you paid a visit to the show I know some of the major machinery suppli-

ers were not there but it's not all about them it's about Education - it's the way forward.

Congratulations to Head Greenkeeper Brian Hughes of Whickham GC who will have worked there for 25 years on 7 February. How

time flies I remember that day well as I was Head Greekeeper. Other members of staff included John Rippon who moved to

Birtley GC, Jim Hagen and Carl Gallagher - I wonder what happened to those two. Never mind at least Brian stuck it there through thick and thin.

That's it for another month, remember any news for me just get in touch.

Jimmy Richardson



North West

By the time you get these notes I am hoping that those that could attend BTME had a very informative time there. At the moment at my golf club we are suffering as I'm sure many are with the effects of the weather over the last season. These times are hard for many of us and I am hearing of many clubs trimming budgets to make ends meet. We have just got to get stuck in and try and give the members a really good course this season, but if mother nature conspires to throw more of the wet stuff at us then we face a near impossible task. I am sure that the golf courses in this country are in great hands and we will deliver what is expected of us. Hopefully I will have the venues for the golf sorted by the next issue of the magazine. I have been asked if I can arrange a training course for the use of excavators, I have passed this information on to HQ so if any more of you are interested watch out for it appearing on the forum or website. If anyone has anything to share or any gossip please contact me on 07840706738 or e-mail jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



North

On behalf on the committee

may I wish you a happy new year and hope for a dry season ahead! We cant have another year like the last one...as I write these notes the doom and gloom merchants from the weather centres tell us that we are going to have a bad few weeks of very cold weather and I'm looking out of my window at big flakes of snow.

As normal for this time of year it's very quiet on the news front but BTME next up I should have a bit more gossip for you soon. I won't be there this year as I'm in for a bit of knee surgery. Hopefully you should be getting your fixture list for this season this month so please have a good look at it. You will agree that we are playing top notch courses (as always) so make a good effort to attend some of them. We start the fun at Hornsea Golf Club on the 24 April and we have a new format to find our scratch champion with the combined scores from Hornsea and at Woodsome Hall in September to count. Most of the events this year are an afternoon start so we can get in a shift at work before we play, yes I understand it's going to be a late finish but at least we get a chance to work on the course beforehand.

That's all folks for now, feet up for me for a couple of weeks and I will look forward to seeing you at Hornsea, any news and gossip from BTME please let us know.

Andy Slingsby
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Cleveland

Hello everyone, my name is Martin Woods, if you don't know me I'm the only Mackem working at Bedlingtonshire Golf Club and your guest writer for February.

News from my course this month - chainsawing! Yes it's too wet to do much else, but to be honest I'm enjoying the exercise after my usual glutinous Christmas. Why did I buy all those biscuits? If Ian Pemberton is reading this and wondering what a chainsaw is, they're used for chopping down trees. Yes, trees Ian, they look like your cooling towers with leaves on in case you've forgotten! Lucky

man!

Special thanks to Terry Charlton for putting on a fantastic quiz back in December and thanks to all the greenkeepers who came, a great night and a great victory, happy retirement TC. Barry Walker should hopefully put his quiz on at the end of February; look out for details in the section newsletter. Please come along, it's good crack, pretty informal and teams are made up on the night.

I hope everyone attended BTME last month and enjoyed it. The lads and I did a couple of one day courses and two days of seminars. For those of you who walked the show and went for a pint, you're missing out! Sami and Rachael run the education like clockwork and a lot of it is free! For the price of a twin room, two lads can have two full days of seminars. Make sure you badger your course manager or greens chairman next year, if they're a forward thinking club like mine then they will snap your hand off. It's obviously going to be a difficult year money wise, so I think the more education the better. I know that nobody is irreplaceable, but with redundancies looming for a few of us let's try and make ourselves a little less disposable.

Well that's it from me, thanks for reading. Martin



North Wales

The shortest month deserves a pretty short column so let's see how few words I can do this in, here goes; Jez Hughes started his captaincy at the Vale of Llangollen golf club with a drive in on 5 January, best of luck trying to wear two caps as course manager and captain for the next year. The early winter seminar at Deeside College was an extremely informative and enjoyable half day; we have another seminar coming up on 13 February please try to attend as I know Paul Lowe and Rhys Butler have worked hard to bring you another great day.

The bus to BTME ran with just enough passengers to make it viable, but only just - please try to support our endeavours as you may just find that if you don't use them, you'll lose them! I hope that was few enough

Around The Green

words, so that just leaves me to say, all the best until next month.

Pete Maybury e-mail petemayb66@aol.com, phone or text 07756001187 Facebook North Wales B.I.G.G.A

MIDLAND



East Midland

So Harrogate, sorry BTME, has been and gone again. It's like an annual family gathering of both close and distant relatives... 'We really must keep in touch more' – means 'Same time next year?' I think the standard of education at BTME was, as good, if not better than ever. As I always point out, it's good to know that the day to day problems we experience aren't exclusive to ourselves and they seem far less worrying when you hear that your peers are going through the same things, sometimes on a much larger scale. There for the grace of God go I... I want to take the opportunity of blowing the proverbial trumpet of the section that I'm proud to be a member of. Over the past handful of years the East Midlands Section has produced TWO BIGGA National Golf Champions in Derek McJannett and Paul Frith, TWO Toro Students of The Year in Matt Wormwald and this year Tom Flavelle and FIVE representatives of the Bernhard Delegation including Nick Miles, Nigel Colley, Andy de Wet, myself and this year Asa English. Wouldn't you agree that that is a pretty impressive record from a section comprising around two hundred members? For what it's worth, I do. So I would encourage you to come along to events, both golf, non-golf or education that the section puts on, and reap the rewards on offer. In the words of Delia Smith (at half time on the pitch at Carrow Road having sipped several glasses of Merlot)... 'Come on where are you?!

Now there's only so much admin that one can find to do at this time of the year but as long as the kettle is within reach it makes the task of Health & Safety updates etc that much

more bearable. One job I will be pulling in soon will be to update my new BIGGA calendar with birthdays and other memorable dates for 2013. And looking at the list I can see I need to be writing a birthday card for Ipswich Town's biggest (some say only) supporter Simon Banks. Apparently he is twenty-one again this year but I have been doing my homework and have discovered the truth behind this false claim. Having recently bumped into the ever suffering Mrs Banks (shopping with Simon's gold Amex card, her, not me), on the high street of Market Harbour-ough I asked her what her plans were for the man of the house's 'special' birthday. She put her Harvey Nicks bags down and said 'Keep this to yourself but I've booked us a box for Norwich versus Reading on Wednesday night, I've picked myself a 'top dress' for the occasion so I hope he appreciates the effort that I've gone to for his fiftieth!

On that bombshell I'll sign off for now and start thinking about what I can get my mother for Mother's Day....

Greg Skinner
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Midland

Well what's this I hear through the grapevine? My old mate at Harborne GC, Alan Shore, at the tender age of 58 went down on one knee on Christmas day and proposed to his girlfriend Lorraine. All this following Alan's determined mindset that he would never marry again, never say never Schwalan. Once the love bug gets you, you're doomed. Good for you my old china. I wonder if your first dance with the blushing bride will be your impressive Cossack dance, and trust me folks I tried it and nearly broke my back. I wish you both the greatest of happiness. I know Alan will consider himself the lucky one. In my humble opinion Lorraine is such. My thanks to Steve Harris for the above.

This month's calendar page sponsor is Burrows Grass Machinery. Please consider them for your sales, service,

and spares for Ransomes and Jacobsen products. Tel: 01785 666 100.

It is now my saddest of duties to report that Sue Blake, wife of our old friend Kim at Fulford Heath has lost her courageous battle with the big C. I was fortunate to have met Sue on many occasions and found her to be a most wonderful lass. I'm sure that all of the section will join me in sending our most sincere condolences to Kim and his family in this most difficult of times.

Sean McDade



Berks, Bucks & Oxon

By the time you read this we shall be well on the way to spring with winter behind us and a drier summer and golfing season in prospect! Hopefully many of you managed to attend BTME and experience the show and all the week had to offer. For those of you preparing to head to San Diego for the GCSAA Show I'm sure it will be a fantastic week and an invaluable experience.

In other news the Oxfordshire Golf Club hosted the 2012 Turkey Trot back in December. (Due to deadline dates for the magazine results have been delayed) A magnificent turnout saw 112 players and 24 teams battled it out over a very frosty course. A great day was had by all with The Young Bucks being crowned the winners with a net score of 59.2; second were We Are Only Here For The Raffle net 59.5; third The Berkshire B net 60.0; fourth The Hack Bandits 60.6. The best gross score of the day was won by John Ryan with a 63. A thank you must go to all of the staff at the Oxfordshire who looked after everyone fantastically. In particular a big thanks must go Course Manager Sean Wilson and his team. The event was very kindly sponsored by T H Whites. Without the continued support of our sponsors these days could not happen. Nearest the pins and longest drives were sponsored by: Swan Golf Designs, Par Aide, Banks Amenity, Rigby Taylor and Pin Point Visualisation.

Barry Holt and Bill Paterson of Burford GC and Beconsfield

GC respectively have reached retirement age! Both have seen many changes in the industry and we wish them a long and happy retirement.

If anyone is interested in or needs any training be it chain-saw or spraying courses etc. then please get in touch with our Regional Administrator Sandra Raper sandra@bigga.co.uk As a reminder if anyone wishes to have their current email address added to the BIGGA HQ system then please drop Sandra an e mail with your contact details.

Dates and venues for this year's section events will be confirmed in the coming months. The format will follow last year's schedule: spring and summer meeting plus the Turkey Trot. Last year's golf days were well attended and we hope to see many of you again this year. Invites and information will be e mailed out rather than posted in an attempt to curb costs. If you wish to receive news and or any information regarding golf days and all section events then please send your e mail address and details to Matt Nutter.

If anyone has any news, views or ideas they would like to see for the BB&O section then please don't hesitate to get in touch: bboscribe@gmail.com or contact the committee/Matt Nutter: bbosecretary@gmail.com

Alternatively keep up to date with what is happening in the BB&O section by following us on Twitter, Facebook and the web site: www.bbogreenkeepers.co.uk



Mid Anglia

Hello everybody I hope all are well and looking forward to what 2013 has to throw at us... hopefully it will be a little less testing than what was endured in 2012 which has officially gone down as one of the wettest years in the last century. But, I'm sure you were all well aware of that fact and glad to see the back of 2012. The snow is lying on the ground and golf is not really an option at this point. With BTME looming I hope everybody who is making the long journey up to Harrogate enjoys the show and let's see what new tools and innovations

are available for improving our surfaces for the coming season and beyond.

Short and sweet - I look forward to seeing many of you in the near future. If you do have any news for future editions please get in touch as it really helps.

Darren - d.mugford@rigby-taylor.com

SOUTH EAST



Surrey

The beast from the east, bad weather has returned to haunt our roads and golf courses with some of the coldest and harshest temperatures to test our resolve for some time. This monsoon style of weather just continues, as we start to slither towards the start of the Chinese year of the water snake, yes I did say water, which starts on February 10. According to ancient astrology predictions, new inventions, outstanding medical breakthroughs and worryingly, the devastating and dangerous weather patterns we experienced in 2012 look set to continue and possibly intensify. Let us just hope that myth and Chinese wisdom get it wrong. Roll on the summer.

Congratulations to James Lewis who has just celebrated his birthday at Camberley Heath GC at the young age of 60, this keen but anxious Everton supporter is known for working with surgeon-like precision around the course giving inspiration to his fellow greenkeepers. All of them have told him its been statistically proven that birthdays are good for you. The more you have the longer you live. Happy Birthday James.

Three-wheelers have been rolling around my mind recently - not because I've been watching Del Boy run his errands in repeats of Only Fools and Horses - but because I paid a visit to North Hants GC and found myself intrigued by Rob Schofield's recent investment in a purchase of a new vehicle. This vehicle has can be seen flying in and around the

North Hants area, described as the yellow peril, the vehicle is a cross between a Reliant Robin and a French passion wagon. Far from Trotter's beaten up old car, this new iconic design has a modern twist and is crammed full of technology. Test drives are available if you are brave enough.

A note for your diary: the annual regional dinner at Walton Heath GC will take place on 6 March 2013 and it is sure to be once again a fantastic event and a chance to let you hone your golfing skills at one of the greatest venues on the golfing calendar. Regional Administrator Clive Osgood can be contacted on 07841948410 who will be able to provide more details on this event, updates on the section website.

BTME - recently passed and packed with memories to treasure, an education feast to savour and friendships to last a lifetime, magic and sparkle makes this North Yorkshire venue a favourite throughout the industry, all of which characterise and set benchmarks of excellence in the world of greenkeeping. Long may it continue.

Mark Day



Kent

It would be very easy to theme this month's column around the recent weather issues being experienced by one and all. However, I shall resist the temptation as I'm sure none of you need reminding how cold and bleak conditions have been of late. I always find that this time of year is ideal for developing teams. Much of the work being carried out during cold snaps is done with multiple numbers of staff and encouraging team relationships during these periods is ideal for staff bonding and trust which, in turn, pays dividends by helping to ensure the playing quality and condition of the course in future months. Morale in teams can be quite low at these times of year so I think it is important to, where practical, encourage as much staff interaction as possible

to get us through the winter months.

Individual appraisals and team meetings are also often enlightening experiences for managers and staff alike. And all educational opportunities should be exploited to the max until the frozen tundra starts to defrost itself. Staff development is something many of us struggle to find time for when the season is in full swing so it is important to make the most of quieter times of the year when more attention can be given to each individual.

On to issues in our fair county. Well, as usual, no-one has contacted me with any news so I guess everything is fine. Harrogate will have been and gone by the time you read this. I hope those of you that made the trek up enjoyed the experience and feel suitably enlightened by the seminars.

One noteworthy item I have experienced when I was working at Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club recently was that one of the greenstaff, Dean Read, has an ambition to become a hair-stylist and regularly practices by honing his mercurial talents during breaks on the rest of the greenstaff at the club (the ones with hair anyway!). Consequently Dean's skills have resulted in surely the most coiffured group of greenstaff in the region! Dean has set up a freelance sideline business now and I'm sure will soon be a stylist to the stars! Good luck mate.

Just want to say thank you to those companies who have chosen to sponsor us this year. Your names and links to your homepages should now be on our webpage.

That's it for now. All news on fixtures etc. online at webpage below.

Don't forget to contact me if you need any help on your courses. All details on webpage.

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Rob Holland

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Sussex

I would like to start by wishing you all a Happy New Year.

Assistant Profile

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



Name: Rich Morris

Age: 28

Club: Brickhampton Court Golf Club

Position: Greenkeeper

Nickname: Footlong

1. How long have you been greenkeeping? Seven years

2. What was it about the career that attracted you? Being outside and being involved in golf

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

4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why? Cutting the greens, for the instant result.

5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why? Raking bunkers, we have a high population of foxes and they use our bunkers for business and pleasure

6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot? More availability of job progression

7. Hobbies? Golf and fitness

8. Favourite Band? Oasis

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

10. What is your claim to fame? Granddad played rugby for Gloucester

BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Scotland Region

Lewis Milne, Scotsraig Golf Club, Central Section
 Finlay Sillars, Machrie Bay Golf Club, Central Section

Northern Region

Jamie Hardy, Brough Golf Club, Northern Section
 Kristian Smith, Brough Golf Club, Northern Section
 Chris Hall, Alwoodley Golf Club, Northern Section
 Steven Bennett, Alwoodley Golf Club, Northern Section

Midland Region

James Sergeant, Sudbrook Moor Golf Club, Midland Section
 Gary Firkins, Landmark Media International, East of England Section
 Chris Barber, Stockwood Park Golf Club, Mid Anglia Section

South East Region

Alexander Bernadello, Woodcote Park Golf Club, Surrey Section
 David Fraser, Wisley (The) Golf Club Plc, Surrey Section
 Daniel Rice, Wisley Golf Club, Surrey Section
 Joshua Umney, Wisley Golf Club, Surrey Section
 Daniel Fisher, St Augustines Golf Club, Kent Section

South West/South Wales Region

David Mitchell, Osprey Water Management Ltd, South West Section
 Ian Trott, Salford Golf Club, South West Section
 Ben Gregory, South Cerney Golf Course Limited, South West Section
 Charlie Cripps, Wickham Park Golf Club, South Coast Section
 Martyn Lane, Martyn Lane Golf Signs, Devon & Cornwall Section
 Collin Shaw, Grassed Up, South Wales Section

Overseas

David Bigsby, Landshut GC, Germany
 Carl-Johan Lonnberg, Swedish Golf Federation, Sweden
 Peter Edman, Swedish Golf Federation, Sweden

The annual Turkey Trot was held on November 30 at Worthing Golf Club. George must be thanked for producing a wonderful course for the day and in particular for arranging such beautiful weather. A super day was had by all and thanks go to Ernest Dow for the most welcoming halfway barbecue. The overall winning team for the day was Gary Ogilvie, Alan Pearce, Matt Perks and Paul Bodle. There was a spectacular hole in one for Mike Gould that cost him a bit in the bar!

It was a cool, clear winter afternoon on 10 December that saw the section's AGM, held again this year at the Dyke Golf Club. The business was preceded, as

is now the custom, by 9 holes of golf. Eric Green won with 21 points and yet again Glynn Polard achieved the longest drive. Although the strong northerly wind brought an unpleasant chill to the day, the course was in spectacular condition and the cloudless skies rewarded players with stunning views out across Brighton to the channel. Many thanks to the Dyke Golf Club for the golf, meeting venue and vast quantities of refreshments. The election of officers is as follows: Chairman Rob Hudson; Vice chairman Matt Crossley; Secretary Pete Smith; Treasurer Dave Allen. Thanks and appreciation was given by all to Dave Allen for all his work as Secretary over the past few years. Many thanks also went to Eric Green for writing this column month in and month out and I shall now be taking on this pleasure. I would be grateful if you could contact me with any news. Thanks, Chris Humphrey. 07912 669457 or chris@collier-turf-care.co.uk



Essex

2013 has hit us hard with snow and ice being the main feature of the year so far, but we are used to all this adversity and I'm sure we will be back at it and working solidly in the next few weeks.

The main event for the greenkeeping fraternity so far this year, has been the very successful BTME and education program, held in Harrogate. A few members from our section made the long trip up to Yorkshire, revelling in the workshops and seminars that were on offer, some just for a couple of days, others for the full week. It was good to be there and meet up with old friends and spend time talking and networking with college representatives and the trade.

The Pairs Knockout final was played back in early December. The Venue was again Purdis Heath Golf Club. The finalists this year were Sam Cook and Craig Serafin, Colchester GC, Liam Springett, Braintree GC, and Campbell Murdoch, Stoke by Nayland GC. They were blessed with a fresh, but dry

(bit of rarity at the moment) winter's morning at Purdis and with three of them not having played the course before it was going to be an interesting day out. Campbell and Liam drew first blood and took the early lead and led 2 up at the turn, the next 4 holes went the way of Sam and Craig to put them 2 up after 13 holes. Campbell and Liam then came back again and levelled the match. They stood all square on the 16th tee, this hole was halved and with the light fading by the minute, play off holes were looming. The 17th hole went to Sam and Craig, who then managed to hold on and halve the 18th to nick a very close match 1up. A big thanks to Tony Kirwan and Purdis Heath Golf Club, for sorting out the day for them, good company and great day out.

www.essexbigga.co.uk Contact details 07764-862.337 or essexbigga@talktalk.net

SOUTH WEST & WALES



South West

Despite a brief lapse last month we're back with the latest from the South West. As of this month I have taken over the helm from Adam Matthews, many thanks to Adam for his hard work every few weeks in keeping everyone up to date on, a tough act to follow. Being reasonably new to the Section I am slowly getting to know everyone through either Section events or if any of you have been up to Bowood in the last two seasons but please don't hesitate to drop me a line with any news or events.

All the way back to December now, and our Christmas Tournament kindly and successfully hosted by Bath Golf Club and despite arctic weather conditions we had a great turnout of both golfers and course walkers with well over 50 seated for Christmas dinner. Well done to the team at Bath who turned out a fantastic course under such difficult conditions and (it must have been coincidence!)

who also took the honours on the day. Through some fierce competition between two unnamed but well known section members to corner the prize pool and bolstered by a brilliant effort from the rest of us less serious rafflers the world famous South West Section Christmas raffle raised over £260 in aid of Dorothy House Hospice, many thanks to all who contributed.

With the new year firmly under way now is the perfect time to let you know that our tournament schedule is almost complete and includes some great venues such as Salisbury GC, Minchinhampton GC, Filton GC, North Wilts GC, Chipping Sodbury GC and The Manor House. Please keep an eye on your inboxes and the South West Section Facebook page for details or get in touch with Adam or myself for further information.

Congratulations to section members Lucy Sellick from Saltford GC and Joe Curtis from South Cerney GC who were selected to attend BTME as part of a programme of attendance sponsored through contributions from both Section and Regional patrons whose support is invaluable. The sponsored places offered by our patronage partners offer a brilliant opportunity for our members to attend an outstanding event, many thanks to Ecosol, Irritech Limited, Countrywide, Headland Amenity, Avoncrop and Martyn Lane Signs for their continued support.

Well done to the group who recently completed the Excavator Safety Training course organised by our training team Adam and Paul, a valuable opportunity to sharpen specialist skills. Please keep your eyes on your specialist equipment tickets as these may require update training to maintain validity. If you do have any concerns or specific training ideas please get in touch with Adam or Paul at Minchinhampton GC to let them know.

That's all for now, as I wrote earlier don't hesitate to drop me a line with any news or events at your clubs or anywhere in the section.

Jaey Goodchild
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j.goodchild@bowood.org



South Coast

Hi all,

Some very sad news to start, Alex McCombie's wife Margaret passed away on Christmas Eve following a short illness, she died peacefully in her sleep from heart failure. Our thoughts and best wishes are with you Alex at this devastating time.

Not a lot happening in the section, most of us are looking forward to some settled weather and being able to get on with outstanding jobs. I have never seen the course so wet, lakes in places that have never been wet before. In fact one pond that has formed in a hollow that gravel was extracted from years ago is so spectacular that I would like to keep it as another feature.

The section seminar is at Milton Abbey School on Wednesday 20th February. Speakers for the day are Chris Haspell from Castle Stuart Golf Club in Inverness, John Lockyer from the Roehampton Club, Darren Baldwin Groundsman from Tottenham Hotspur FC and Paul Lowe from Symbio. A great line-up of speakers so please try to be there. Flyers will be out by the time you read this, so if you haven't already booked do so now. Cost for the day will be £20 for members and £25 for non-members. Contact Alex on southcoastsecretary@gmail.com for more information.

Our golf meetings this year start with a visit to the amazing Remedy Oak Golf Club for the Colin White Memorial, Spring Trophy, sponsored by Avoncrop on the 16 April. The cost for the day is £35, this is going to be popular so you need to get your booking and payment in to Kevan Glass well in advance of the day. Remember payment on the day is no longer acceptable if you have not paid in advance your name will not be on the start sheet and you will not be playing. Entries to glassy2003@hotmail.com, you can also pay on line.

That's about it for this month, look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Seminar and the golf events.

Tony

Devon & Cornwall



Hello all.

It's been a busy period since I last posted notes on here, so here goes!

Firstly we would like to welcome a new member on to the Committee, Cameron McMorris from East Devon GC. Cam was a part-time green-keeper at Crowborough Beacon Golf Club in East Sussex. It was there he decided greenkeeping was the career for him! He's been at East Devon for 5 years and has successfully completed his NVQ Level 2 and aims to complete his Level 3 to gain more experience and improve professional knowledge. It is going to be great to have a younger member on board and get his perspective on the industry, well done for volunteering Cameron!

Our Christmas meeting was held at Ashbury Golf Club, Okehampton. A very frosty but stunning day greeted us, which was fantastic for the 48 attendees on the day. The golf format was Greensomes playing for the Ransomes Jacobsen Cup and the Irritect Cup. The course walk was led by Pete Gross, Deputy Courses Manager at Ashbury. The walk was actually a drive looking at parts of the Kigbeare Course and the Forrest Course. Pete showed us some of the unique problems a business like Ashbury has because of the sheer volume of golf the site has to cater for. There seems to be an endless list of projects being carried out to combat drainage and traffic route issues. The courses were in great condition and a testament to Steve Harris (Courses Manager) and the rest of the team at Ashbury. A special mention to one of our sponsors for the day - MST - who set up the 'Halfway House' which catered for both the golfers and the course-walkers. We were all treated to a pasty and a beverage courtesy of MST, thanks to Lee Kirk and the team. The course drive culminated in a tour around the maintenance facilities which were of a very high standard. Thanks to all involved in the course walk and especially Pete for leading the way and answering the questions. Tra-

ditional Christmas lunch was served with the obligatory wearing of cracker hats and eating of sprouts. This was followed by the presentation of prizes and the Christmas raffle. The winners of the golf were Justin Austin and Andrew George (Tretborne GC) 40 points' 2nd Jon Bullen and Shaun Warren (Staddon Heights GC) 38; 3rd Andrew Prouse and David Daw (Porthpean GC) 35. Nearest the Pin on the 12th and Longest Drive on the 16th went to Adam Bridgewater (Yelverton GC) and Longest Drive on the 10th went to Garry Foster (Tavistock GC). A huge thank you to our sponsors for the day MST and Irritect Ltd for donating all the prizes and for their continued support of the Section.

After the presentation, the members participated in a variety of activities ranging from Snooker to Indoor mat bowls. The teams were naturally divided into Devon and Cornwall and the friendly rivalry began. Thank you to Steve and Ashbury for organising the activities. A tremendous day all around and a great way to finish the year.

Our January meeting was held at Perranporth Golf Club in Cornwall. For those of you who do not know, Perranporth is one of the most natural links in the country on a unique dune system that is placed well above sea level. Perranporth is more famously known in our circles for its Head Greenkeeper, Billy Mitchell. Billy has been at Perranporth all his working life (50 years) and has always been heavily involved with BIGGA and the industry. He's been very influential to younger greenkeepers in the Section and has also been at the forefront of many trials and philosophies regarding new products and techniques. Having said that, Billy works from a foundation of simple and natural greenkeeping, encouraging, promoting and sustaining fine grasses on his surfaces. Billy is a very popular character within the industry and the section, and this was always going to be a popular event, backed up by a total of 73 attendees for the day. The golf format for the day was individual Stableford and the conditions were perfect, bright sunshine (on the most part) and hardly a breath of wind, no excuses then! The Course walk

entertained 40+ of the attendees and a quick bit of delegation that morning saw Nick Dash and Shaun Trudgeon take the helm and lead the way. The course and site was looking fantastic and especially for January in light of the year we had just had. The greens were very firm with high percentages of fescue dominating the swards. Nick and Shaun took the group around the course stopping off at some key areas and explaining where recent work had been carried out and why. One of the key areas that Perranporth have addressed in recent times is the reduction of hard material path systems and instead reverting back to natural turf where possible using various types of turf stabilisation and reinforcement materials. The Course walk and Golf was followed by a Carvery meal and presentations. Jon Wood, Course Manager at Trevoze Golf and Country Club, kindly gave an educational presentation on his experiences leading up to and being involved with the 2010 Open Championship at St Andrews, where at the time he was Deputy Head Greenkeeper on the Old Course. A huge thank you to Jon for agreeing to this, not knowing he would have such a large audience on the day, Jon gave a very professional and enlightening presentation which all the attendees enjoyed, thank you Jon!

Billy was presented a plaque from the Section to mark his 50 years in the Industry and his involvement and help with the Section over the years. He also received a bottle of Whisky and a Season ticket to Cornish Pirates Rugby Club. Thank you Billy for a fantastic day and for all your help with the Section.

A big thank you to all involved in organising the day and to all the attendees for making the effort to attend, especially those who drove long distances, it really made it a special day!

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