

Around the Green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

NORTHERN

Our winter tournament took place at Baildon GC. As you might expect for the time of year, the weather was decidedly mixed with everything but snow thrown at us in a howling wind.

The day was a great success nevertheless and everyone concerned enjoyed themselves. I must thank the head greenkeeper and staff for their preparation of the course under such wet conditions, the catering staff for an excellent meal and also to Baildon GC for allowing us the use of the course and clubhouse facilities. I must also thank all the sponsors for their contributions and support of our organisation.

The result: 18-stableford - 1, D Collins; 2, A Baxter; 3, R Smith; nearest the pin - G Potter.

At the AGM Pat Murphy announced that he was to move on to the board, and put myself forward as new secretary. The committee and I would like to thank Pat for all his hard work over the past two years and wish him all the best for the future. As for myself, my name is Marcus Cordingley and I hope I can do the job as well as Pat has done. If I can help you in anyway please do not hesitate in contacting me, I will try my best to help you. My home number is 0274 601195.

MARCUS CORDINGLEY

MIDLAND

The weather may have been wet for our Christmas tournament at Little Aston GC but it certainly didn't dampen people's enjoyment of the day. Many thanks to Alan Bovaston and his staff for a well turned out course. Also many thanks to Little Ashton GC for allowing us courtesy of their course and for the delightful meal in the evening. The winner was Trevor Morris who was presented with a BIGGA blazer by Nigel Tyler, courtesy of Ruffords. Many thanks to Ruffords and also to the many trade companies that supported us during 1994.

On December 15 we descended on Edgbaston GC for our AGM. Many thanks to the members who turned out and showed their support. The section presented Alan Kite with a watch for the many years served as chairman as he was stepping down. Many thanks, Alan.

The following were elected as officers and committee members: Chairman - M Hughes; Vice Chairman - P Richmond; President - R Pugh; Section secretary - K Blake; Treasurer - P Richmond; Committee members - S Blakeham, R Thomas, E Staut, R Hayhurst, P Woodham, D Cleaver.

On a sad note I was sorry to hear of the death of Trevor Stone of Shirley Golf Club for some 19 years. Trevor was 44 years old. The section sends its condolences to his family and friends. Finally can I wish Kim Blake success as our new section secretary and thank the many people who have supported me over the last three years.

DEAN CLEAVER



EVENTS DIARY

March 3/4: Irish Golf Greenkeepers Association golf course management conference, Prince of Wales Hotel, Co Westmeath. Tel: (010353) (0)1 8207444

April 26: Westurf, Long Ashton GC, Bristol

May 9: Drainage '95, Rockingham Castle Estate, Market Harborough, Leics. Tel: 01604 499662

June 21: South Turf, Motpur Park, South West London

July 20-23: The Open Championship, St Andrews

July 31-August 2: National Tournament, St Annes Old Links Golf Club, Lytham

September 13-14: Hayter Challenge Tournament Final, West Lancashire Golf Club, Blundellsands

SUSSEX

Our last golf tournament of 1994 brought us back to our favourite stomping ground, Littlehampton GC.

Unlike our last visit, the weather this year was superb - no wind and plenty of sunshine. This complemented the course, which was in superb condition. Again thanks to Dave Wood and his staff for all the effort they must have put in, especially for dragging the mince pies and alcohol halfway across the course. How come the whisky was half-empty, Dave?

The day started with a hot breakfast at 8.30am, followed by the teams of four teeing off for the Texas scramble competition. Altogether, 13 teams took part.

Results: 1, J Bradbeer, R Beach, R Hudson, N Dunbar 52pts; 2, R Day, M Ring, J Budd, P Ward 51 points; 3, B Francis, P Chalk, D Haste, T Bremer 50pts. Each member came away with turkey vouchers donated by Avoncrop and bottles of wine supplied by our section.

Also during the round there were five nearest the pin competitions together with a longest drive. The winners were: Nearest the pin - 3rd, N Dunbar; 6th, R Hudson; 8th, P Ray; 11th, R Beach; 16th, D Ansell (5mm from the hole!) The longest drive was won by R Beach. Each winner received a bottle of wine. Mention at this stage must go to George Barr for behind-the-scenes organising which, for an event like this, is not a five minute job. So, on behalf of the section, thank you.

After a superb Christmas dinner we had our prizegiving and our now famous 'bring an unwrapped prize' presentation and raffle. The day ended around 8pm, with everyone in festive mood.

Finally, the Sussex section would like to thank the secretary, Keith Palmer, and the committee of the golf club for extending us the use of their club, to the bar and catering staff for looking after us so well.

MARK WILTON

DEVON AND CORNWALL

Eighty members and trade members attended our Christmas meeting, held once again at Okehampton Golf Club. Our golfing members were treated to a pleasant dry day to test their

skills against the excellently presented course for the morning's 18-hole greensome competition for the PJ Flegg Trophy.

Our congratulations to Richard Wisdom and his staff who had the course in excellent playing condition despite all the rain earlier in the month.

After an excellent Christmas dinner, Ivan Brown of PJ Flegg presented the golf prizes for the morning's greensome competition to: 1, T Ramsden (Budock Vean) and A James (Tehidy) 37pts on back nine; 2, T Martin (Torquay) and R Whyman (Bude) 37pts; 3, T Blackburn (Crediton) and R Chudleigh (Fingle) 35pts on back nine.

After our golf presentation we were entertained by the superb comedian Tank Sherman, back by popular demand. Tank kept us all laughing for well over an hour. The raffles concluded a superb day, with the first raffle being for two hampers kindly donated by Avoncrop and Peter Andrewarths and won by Tim Ellis and Tony James. The second raffle contained over 40 prizes kindly donated by members and the trade.

Our thanks to Ivan Brown of PJ Flegg for donating and presenting the day's golf prizes, also thanks to our president Alan Dommatt for supplying the lunch wine.

The section would also like to express its gratitude to Okehampton GC for allowing us use of their facilities once again.

Dates for our diary: Feb 21 - meeting at Wrangaton GC; March 22 - meeting at Mullion GC; April 26 - Westurf Trade Show, Long Ashton GC, Bristol.

At our AGM the secretary reported that attendances at meetings have steadily risen but the committee is conscious that the percentage of members attending has dropped. The committee would like to hear suggestions to improve participation. The secretary also explained there had been a slight loss (£47.54) on last year's balance, but with the purchase of a photocopier for £705 he felt that the accounts were in a workable cash flow position. Thanks were conveyed to the Regional Board for the generous donation of £250 towards the photocopier.

Retiring president John Palfrey thanked members for their tremendous support. The chairman, Jeff Mills, thanked Gordon and Marion Child whose tireless work for the region continues to bring success with our own trade show, Westurf.

Your new committee looks like this: Devon committee members - John Parr and Richard Wisdom; Cornwall committee member, chairman and regional board member - Bill Mitchell; trade member - Clive Ralph; President - Alan Dommatt.

RICHARD WHYMAN

EAST ANGLIA

They say the sun shines on the righteous, so the fact that December 8 was the wettest day for yonks must mean someone is trying to tell

Around the Green



us something as it was also our AGM/golf day at Aldeburgh.

After some alterations, ie swapping the golf and AGM around and swapping golf shoes for flippers, the day wasn't too bad, though we must apologise to those who came for the AGM only to find they missed it.

The AGM was quite lively which means someone actually spoke and Wellsy didn't go to sleep. The outcome from all the huff and puff was that all trophies will be presented at the AGM (if we can find them). A new trophy called the Sam Sylvester Cup will be played for each year, the format is yet to be decided. Sam is still with us I hasten to add, but he will be stepping down from the chair next year.

The election of officers took about two minutes. They are: President - Ernie Hart; Vice President - Bob Chesham; Chairman and treasurer - Sam Sylvester; Vice chairman - Ernie Hart; Handicap secretary - Alan Carter; Secretary - Dave Wells; Scribe - Mike Lathrope; Regional board - Dave Wells and Richard Prior.

Dates to remember - April 26, Braintree; June 6, The Warren (Chelmsford); August 9, Thetford; June 21, Southturf.

New members include Malcolm Orr, Nick Brewster, John Winters and G Fox.

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of John Moyle who was one of the founder members. A man with a big heart and a ready smile whose bubbly character often disguised the trauma of long hours and thousands of miles travelling from one sports club to another. He will be missed and our thoughts and prayers go to his family.

He would have seen the funny side of that rain, which brings us back to the golf. A break in the clouds (about half an inch across) saw our heroes/idiots paddle off. And like ducks, when one goes they all go. Well, nearly all. Andy Arbon and Keith Titshall decided they would be hecklers for the day and take the rain out of everyone else. However with no cards going into the draw, they were last for the lucky dip - a boot with a hole in it and a sock was all that was left.

Toddy, on the other hand, came home with flu and 39pts (his calculator doesn't work in the rain). His partner in crime and synchro-

nised swimming was Ernie Hart on 37pts. Peter Howard was drowned in third with 31pts.

Any golf day would not be the same without our friends from the trade and I would like to thank the following: CMW (main sponsors for the day with turkey vouchers), Rigby Taylor, Rushbrooks, Sisis, Rhone-Poulenc, Kings, Doe, Parker Hart, Johnsons Seeds, Levingtons Horticulture, Turf-Actant, The Greenkeeper Supply Company and Ernie Hart.

Our thanks also to Aldeburgh GC for a super day. Needless to say December 9 was a beautiful day.

Finally, I received this little ditty from John in Surrey: "Another week ends. All greens cut and ready to play. All bunkers raked and tees moved. All members pleased and secretary smiling. All pigs fed and ready to fly."

MIKE LATHROPE

NORTH SCOTLAND

One or two movements concerning the section to mention this month. Doshie Benson from Invergordon joins us as a new member. Moving back into the section is Craig Ogilvie, the new deputy at Boat of Garten. Craig replaces Ian Bell who has moved back to the Edinburgh area to be the head man at Glencorse. Moving into the section to grow-in and manage Strathmore Golf Centre, Alyth, is Jim Brown, formerly of Deer Park, Livingston. We wish them all well.

The section AGM took place at Letham Grange. The golf match finished all square although there was some confusion about the last match, with both players claiming victory! The AGM itself passed off fairly smoothly with local deputy Andy Wilson taking over as chairman and Peterhead's Hugh McClatchie becoming vice-chairman. The remainder of the committee is as follows: Secretary - Iain Macleod, Tain; Treasurer - Gordon Moir, St Andrews; Education - Alastair McLaren, Nethybridge; Sam Morrison of Royal Aberdeen, Neil Macdonald of MTM, Gordon Mckie of Tain, Dougal Duguid of Westhill, and we welcome newly-elected Stewart McBain of Hazlehead. Nineteen members and six trade

reps were present. Thanks to all at Letham Grange for good food and a great golf course.

I recently attended one of the GTC-run SVQs and greenkeeping seminars. I found it very informative and along with a few other greenkeepers registered for D32/D33 training, which will take place this month. It was a pity there

were not more greenkeepers present along with their chairmen of green. This is a new initiative which will allow head greenkeepers to get more involved in the assessing of their trainees. This is something that I feel we must get involved with. Anyone who missed out before can get in touch with me if they want to become an assessor and I will try to put you in the picture. You will be trained at no cost to you or your club.



IAIN MACLEOD

SURREY

Looking back to December 8, not a day you would care to remember but a day that was supposed to see the Turkey Trot played at Kingswood GC which, due to excess rain, had to be called off. Fortunately the rain did not stop 40-50 Surrey members enjoying Christmas lunch, which was followed by the AGM.

Thanks for your attendance and confidence in the current committee. We feel we have had a good year in office and intend to better it in '95. Fixture lists should soon be dispatched to all members.

DAVID GIBBS

SOUTH WEST

Burnham and Berrow was the challenging links venue for the Christmas tournament. A good field of 55 members teed off in cool but relatively calm conditions to play as teams of two for what many found to be a difficult scoring round. Judging by some cards returned, it was fortunate that conditions were calm and not as windy as is frequently the case on this championship course. The links itself was in excellent condition and thanks are given to Jock and his staff for their efforts.

After a pre-meal drink and the selling of raffle tickets to those who felt lucky it was upstairs to the dining room for an excellent traditional Christmas meal. Thanks for this are given to the caterer who looked after our appetites so well.

The results for the event were as follows: 1, Jon Scoones and James Leitch 38pts (back 9); 2, Gary Cook and Paul Legg 38pts; 3, Jock Miller and Mike McCarthy 35pts; 4, Sean Sage and Ivor Scoones 34pts; 5, Marc Haring and Les Johnson 32pts.

A change to previous years then followed with the entrance of a comedian for the next 45 minutes. However, this didn't go without its problems as the original artist let us down with an hour to go and the replacement was only given 40 minutes to get to the club and prepare his act. Under the circumstances, he didn't do too badly.

The drawing of the raffle completed the day with many people winning prizes. Thanks go



SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

on Tuesday 14 March 1995
at Scottish Exhibition Conference Centre, Glasgow

Speakers: Norman Whytock, Rhône Poulenc; Ian McNab, Dumfries & County GC; Nigel Church, Ransomes; Eddie Adams, Old Course, St Andrews; Howard Swan, Swan Golf Designs; Michel Mulder, Barenbrug UK; Mike Higgins, Danfoss Ltd; Ken Siems, Loch Lomond GC.

Cost including morning coffee and lunch: £18.

The conference is sponsored by the Patrons of the Scottish Region.

More details from Elliott Small, Tel: 01259 731445

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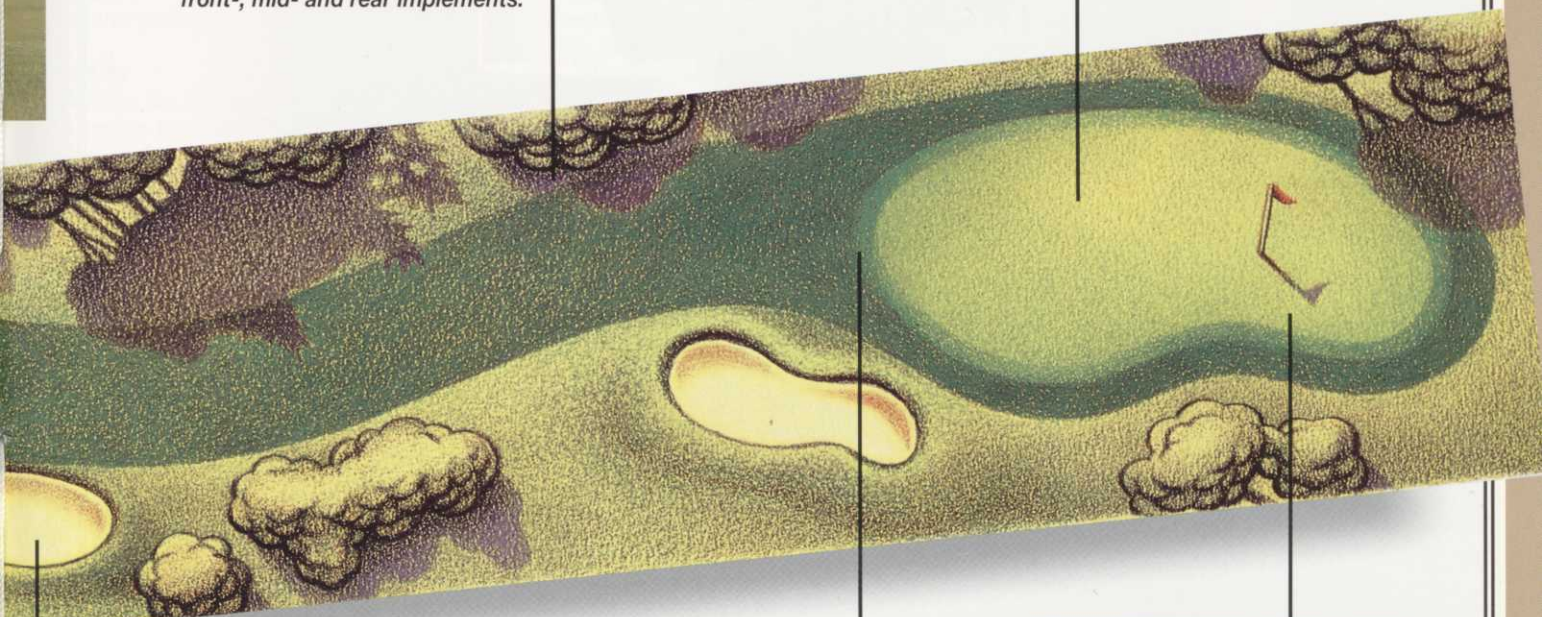
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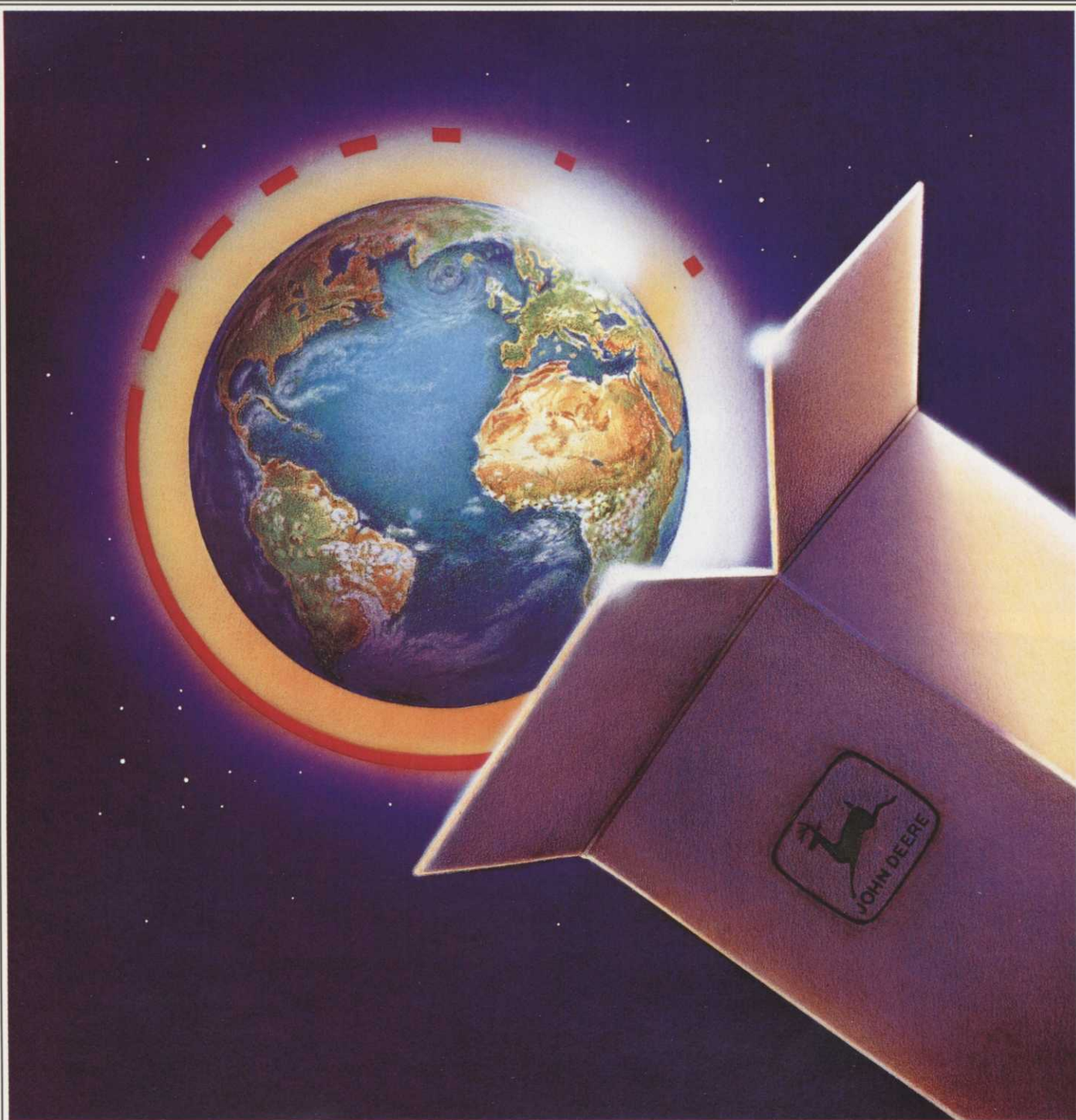
7 The new 1200A Bunker and Field Rake features high manoeuvrability with low compaction and superior push-pull capabilities. A wide range of attachments adds to its versatility and productivity.



8 Superior performance on difficult terrain. Precision cut with 66-cm (26-in.) ESP cutting units with hydraulic reel drive allow the 2653 Utility Mower to work well where others fear to tread.



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Around the Green



to Roffey Brothers, the main sponsors for the day, for trophy presentation and the wine at the meal table. Thanks go to the rest of the trade for their generous donations, too.

The day proved very successful with over 60 members playing and eating. Thanks are extended to the secretary, Mrs Sloman, the vice chairman of Burnham and Berrow, Mike McCarthy, for his participation and to the club itself for its hospitality in granting us course courtesy.

The first section event of '95 will be at Lansdown GC on Thursday February 23. A round of golf and lunch will be followed by a short lecture.

KEVIN GREEN

KENT

I have, for my sins, taken over from the very capable Paul Copsey. It is something I have looked forward to but I feel very apprehensive about the content. I could, of course, drone on and on about my course, its trials and tribulations, or I could write something – if the information is forthcoming – of interest to you all.

A lot of information will come from the other members of the committee, like our new secretary Steve Johnson of Gillingham GC, but if it is to be truly representative it needs your input. To this end you can contact me with any information on 081 698 0620.

It only remains for me to thank Paul Copsey for his good work and also to thank Dave Wood who has stepped down as our secretary but remains on the committee.

Make a note of these dates: April 20 – Spring Tournament at Littlestone GC; September 27 – Autumn Tournament at Birchwood Park GC.

RICHARD PAGE

SHEFFIELD

We had an excellent Christmas competition at Wortley GC thanks to Barry Heaney and his staff. Also a big thank you must go to the steward and his staff for the excellent Xmas meal which we all thoroughly enjoyed. I would also like to thank Brian Booth of Rigby Taylor for being our main sponsor and supplying such lovely prizes for the competition, and the other members of the trade who have supported us throughout the year.

The winners were: 1, S Nixon, Wortley GC; 2, P Lyons, Sherwood Forest GC; 3, B Lax, Worktop GC.

After our meal a presentation was made to Harry Herrington, Henry Gillespie, and Eric Palmer on their retirement from greenkeeping. Harry is ex-chairman of the old BGGGA, Henry has held every possible office in the Sheffield section, and Eric has also served us well on the committee and within the section. We wish all three a very happy and long retirement. There was also a small presentation to Joan Heaney who has helped Barry immensely with our accounts. Our grateful thanks, Joan.

Our final winter lecture was given by David

Stansfield of PSD Agronomy. David delivered his lecture to a full house and the greenkeepers gave David plenty of questions.

IAN COLLETT

NORTH WEST

The fixture list for this year's events is almost finalised and by the time you read this you should have received yours, if not please ring me.

The section events are as follows: March 16 – Northern region seminar at the Tytherington Club; N/W v N/Wales tournament to be arranged; April 13 – Spring Tournament, Wilmslow GC; July 17 – Summer Meeting, Hazel Grove GC; Roses match to be arranged; September 4 – Autumn Tournament, Didsbury GC; Stewards match to be arranged.

The seminar at The Tytherington Club will deal with Health and Safety on Golf Courses and the main speaker will be Jon Allbutt. The cost for the day, including lunch, will be £20. Bring along your secretary and chairman of green because health and safety involves everybody in the golf business. If you wish to contact me please ring me on 051 724 5412.



BERT CROSS

EAST MIDLANDS

The section's last tournament of the year was our Christmas stableford, held at Birstall GC. (Sorry I was unable to attend but it clashed with my college dates.) Our category one winner was again Dave Leatherhead of Kedleston Park, with Adie Porter winning category two. Our thanks go to Roger Willars and his staff for providing us with a first-class course, and to everybody else from Birstall GC for making our day so enjoyable.

The sponsors for the day were Rigby Taylor – thanks for donating the prizes! could I remind members that they must send their entry slip and cheque to me before the closing date for all section events, if they wish to attend.

This month I would like to welcome the following new members to our section: Terry Porter of Chilwell Manor GC, Norman Whetstone of Western GC, Martin Jones and Richard O'Hara of Radcliffe on Trent GC and Steven Attenborough of Breadsall Priory GC.

Finally may I remind all members that if they wish to attend the section's snooker evening on March 1 to make sure they return their forms to me as soon as possible. If you still require an entry form you can phone me on 0533 890301.

ANTONY BINDLEY

SOUTH COAST

We had a good turnout for the Christmas

Turkey Trot, AGM and Christmas dinner at the Royal Winchester GC.

The turkey trot was won by Pat Bell with 38pts. Second was J Moody with 37pts, followed by S Justice, third, and T Patchin fourth, both with 34pts.

The Royal Winchester laid on a splendid meal but the evening was marred by an incident at the bar. The committee members present were unable to find the perpetrator but apologised to the club on behalf of the section. Hopefully the person responsible will realise the damage caused to our good name and send an apology to the club themselves.

We were sorry to hear that Bob Cully, our tournament organiser for 1994, has resigned his post at Lee on Solent GC. The committee is investigating the circumstances surrounding his resignation.

We are nearing the end of our winter lecture programme with one evening left: Wednesday March 1 at Alresford GC where Sparsholt College's Sandy Wilson will inform us about health and safety within our industry.

Also there is the seminar at Sparsholt College on Tuesday March 14. Everyone should have received notification of this. If you haven't returned your application yet, do not delay!

ALAN MITCHELL

A new BIGGA section?

A meeting will be held at the Delamere Forest Golf Club, Station Road, Delamere, Northwich, Cheshire on Wednesday, March 15 at 7.15pm to consider the possible formation of a new BIGGA section to cover the Cheshire, Wirral and Merseyside areas.

All interested persons are invited to attend and join in a discussion with BIGGA's Chairman and Executive Director. Jackets and ties are mandatory.

Getting there: Delamere Forest Golf Club is on a private road off the B5152 (watch out for Marley Tiles) just across the road from the British Rail Delamere Station.

The B5152 is about half way between Northwich and Chester off the A556 (Northwich by-pass). To get to the club turn north opposite the Vale Royal Abbey Arms pub, then right just before the station.



IRISH GOLF GREENKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION presents

Golf Course Management Conference

"TAKING CONTROL"

in The Prince of Wales Hotel, Co. Westmeath, Friday March 3 and Saturday March 4, 1995

Cost: £50 for a member of a greenkeeping association; £60 for non-members. This will include three course lunch each day and tea/coffee breaks.

Contact:

c/o Conference Management Services, 26 Temple Lane, Dublin 2.
Tel: 00-353-1-6797655

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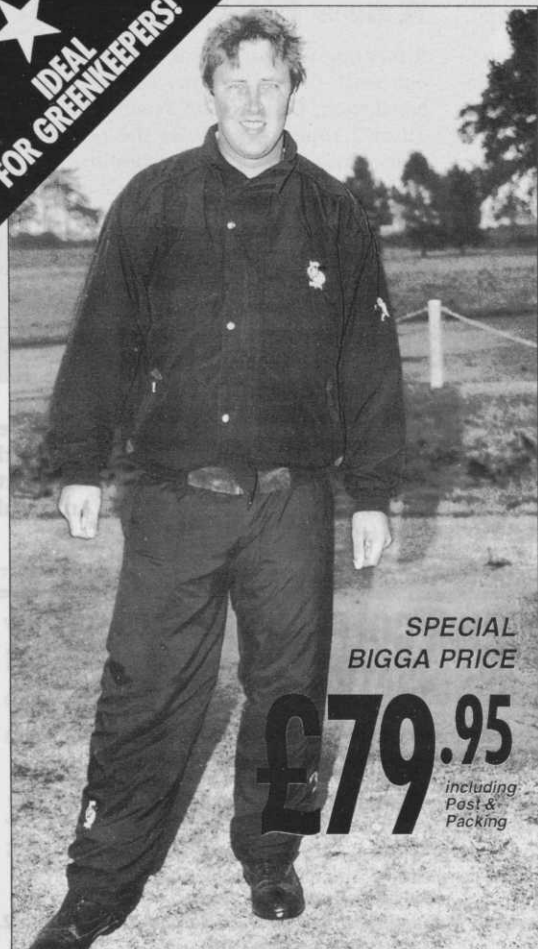
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Ultimate test for drainage scheme

Eleven holes at Aldwark Manor, the Yorkshire course surrounding BIGGA's rented offices, were flooded following a week of heavy snow and rain. This is the view of the 4th and 14th fairways from the 4th tee. The footbridge in the distance shows the normal width of the River Ouse. About £14,000 worth of drainage has been put in over the past three years. Once the level of the river goes down, the greenstaff will be able to see how efficiently it works.



■ **Rochford Garden Machinery of Wincanton, Somerset, is the newest addition to John Deere's dealer network. The business area covers Devon (east of Plymouth), Somerset and West Dorset. Tel: 01963 33713.**

■ **C&P Soilcare Ltd of Nedging, Ipswich, has asked us to point out that its Terralift machine – which places a probe 1m into the soil, blasts it with compressed air simultaneously injecting nutrients – has nothing to do with Terralift Fertilizers. C&P Soilcare can be contacted on 01449 741012.**



Effingham GC first assistant Euan Grant, winner of the Toro/PGA Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award, receives another accolade at the Plump-ton College part-time awards ceremony. He was named as top student on the phase 2/level 2 course.

FLYING DIVOTS



Brian O'Hara has been appointed to the new post of business development manager with Tip Top Turf. Based at

Newton Longville turf nursery, he will be responsible for developing stronger links with existing and potential customers as the company expands into supplying sand, soil, turf dressing and complementary products from Bailey's of Norfolk. Tel: 0908 270701.

■ **Buyers of Rite Feed organic fertiliser could win a trip to Florida. With every drum bought, the purchaser's name will be entered into a draw with the winner going to the GCSAA show in Orlando in February '96. Derek Ganning of The Belfry will make the draw on October 5.**

■ **Writtle College in Chelmsford has been granted university status. It is only the second college serving land-based industries in the country to be granted the status.**

■ **The Welsh College of Horticulture has been named Horticultural College of the Year for the UK by the National Farmers' Union and The Grower magazine.**

■ **Brian D Pierson (Contractors) Ltd has secured two new contracts: a new 27-hole project, Forest Pines Golf Course, near Scunthrope, and the redevelopment of Chestfield GC in Kent following road improvements in the area.**

■ **Collier Turf Care (Dist) Ltd will be holding an open day in Norwich on February 23. Tel: 0603 870944.**

■ **Ransomes has sent £250,000 worth of turf machinery to the first all-grass golf course to be built in the Gulf state of Qatar, the recently completed Dana Golf Club near Doha.**

■ **A local builder has bought 110-acre 18-hole Libbaton Golf Club at Barnstaple, North Devon, for close to £1 million.**

FLYING DIVOTS

■ The head greenkeeper at Shirley Golf Club, Solihull, was found dead in his car on the course. 44-year-old Trevor Stone, who had been at the club for about 19 years, was discovered by a fellow worker at 8am. The car's engine was still running and police believe he had been in the car all night.



Scottish Grass Machinery Ltd has appointed John Pollitt (left) to the new post of general manager of the Perth

operation. His previous jobs include executive appointments with Arthur Bell & Sons, United Distillers and Motorola.

■ Independent irrigation consultant Philip York has been elected chairman of the British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association. He succeeds Paul de Rham, who completed his term in office last month. Philip says: "My objective will be to ensure not only that standards are maintained but that end-users, our customers, will receive even better help, advice and value for their money. This can be achieved by broadening the base of the Association. This means encouraging individuals interested in the technological advances, agronomic implications, the application and use of irrigation to join the BTLIA".

■ East Anglia-based brewing and pubs giant Greene King Plc is reputed to have paid £1.75 million for the 210-acre Langdon Hills' 25-bed Hotel and Golf Club at Basildon, Essex. Plans include refurbishing the site to provide a pay-and-play facility and adapt the existing clubhouse.

■ Essex-based Eastern Tractors has moved to better equipped premises in Chelmsford. Bought out by management last year, Eastern Tractors is now planning to expand and has become Hayter's agent in Essex and north London.



Plum placements for students

These three turf science students from Myerscough College have landed placements at major American courses.

The students, all on the three-year BTEC National Diploma course in Turf Science and Sportsground Management, have secured 12-month work placements that many experienced greenkeepers would die for.

Following last year's successful

placement at the Pinehurst Resort and Country Club in North Carolina, 21-year-old Carl Horrax's placement supervisor recommended him to staff at Augusta National. He's going there shortly to help prepare the course for the US Masters.

As a result of Carl's success at Pinehurst, two other students – Julian Jackson, 20, and John Stevenson, 21 – are following in

his footsteps and heading for Pinehurst Resort.

Not pictured but also heading west are Robin Jackson, 25, who is going to Fiddlesticks Country Club in Florida and Chris Knowles, 21, who is going to the Double Eagle Club in Ohio. Chris could not ask for better conditions in which to further his training, working alongside Master Greenkeeper Terry Buchan.

Apart from broken ankle, Robert's cup floweth over

One of the golden rules of golf is 'keep your eye on the ball'. But for 600 greenkeepers that rule has changed.

For them it has become a case of keeping an eye on the hole. Doing that has just paid off for Royal Dornoch course manager Robert Paterson.



He has just become the first winner in Britain of a set of Regal golf clubs presented by Golf Media, which sells advertising inside golf holes, with each golf club in the scheme getting 20% of the advertising revenue.

Golf Media claim 25% of all golf clubs in Britain have signed up for the scheme. Robert, 31, centre, is pictured being presented with the £500 set of clubs by Golf Media director James Horlick, left. Also pictured is Robert's colleague, John Duncan.

Robert hasn't been able to try out his new clubs yet. The day after the presentation he broke his ankle playing squash.



■ Recently retired course manager Gerwyn Price is being sent packing by BIGGA. As the winner of our draw for members who recommended two other people to join, he has been sent a £600 holiday voucher. When we told him of his success, far-flung places were furthest from his mind. The former Maesteg GC man hinted he'd be going places in this country. "I've never stayed in a four-star hotel," he said. "I might do that for a week with my wife."

● Viscount Whitelaw is pictured with Barry Heaney, making the draw at BTME.

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The good news (for greenkeepers concerned about wear, tear and compaction) is that for the fourth consecutive year the proportion of new golfers (those who have been playing less than two years) is dropping. In other words, according to statistics released by Sports Marketing Surveys, fewer people are taking up the game. The bad news (for greenkeepers concerned about wear, tear and compaction) is that regular golfers are playing more. In other words, compaction as a problem is here to stay. Philip Shaw, head greenkeeper at Royal Norwich Golf Club, Norwich, gives his views on Golf Course Enemy No1.

Throughout the year, compaction occurs on golf playing surfaces. With the move by clubs to encourage play, there is of course a downside – compaction, a word often used but not always fully understood. Climatic conditions throughout the year play their part in causing compaction. Course type is another area together with varying soil type.

Generally, compaction occurs in all areas, and the outcome is not dissimilar in all cases.

To combat the ever increasing threat from compaction the greenkeeper must in his own mind be clear of the form this will take. Having assessed the best approach this must then be set against the availability of on-site plant. Often is the case that clubs engage the services of a contractor, or hire the plant for the job. At most clubs there is often some type of equipment to aerate, in some cases this may only be for the smaller areas such as greens etc.



Having assessed machine capability on site, then the option of hire or purchase has to be considered. The experienced have normally carried out such an exercise time and again. In some cases their requirements are met, however there are those who still see compaction and aeration as separate issues. For some reason the message never seems to get across, maybe it never will. Compaction is responsible for so many problems that, in turn, go on to affect the playing surfaces. Whilst conditions play a part in the timing of aeration operations, it is normally better to proceed in less than perfect conditions than to avoid this vital cultivation.

Many do carry out regular aeration, but there are those who continually are made to

feel uneasy and uncertain as to the reasoning behind this cultivation.

Clubs should be guided by their on-site expert, the head greenkeeper, but sadly his word is often ignored. Aeration is without doubt a cultivation golf courses cannot get enough of, and it is this message that requires getting across to all concerned with golf clubs.

Areas suffering stress during summer and excess wear during winter would benefit from aeration. Golfers, however, only see disruption; disruption that over a period of time will show less as the grass plant develops a deeper, healthier root system.

The need for intense aeration should be a number one priority when assessing maintenance programmes.

Aeration on greens by various means should be intensified throughout the more dormant months of the year. A simple way of looking at requirements of the grass plant is to compare with say an agricultural crop; after harvest the field is ploughed, allowing air into the soil and relieving compaction, deep compaction where relief is necessary, carried out by sub-soil cultivation. Amenity turf is subject to compaction throughout the year, movement of air and water through the rootzone is vital.

Verti-draining carried out on all areas on a regular basis throughout dormant months, together with, where possible, complementary bayonet or slit tine cultivation would do much to lessen the problems associated with compaction.

The fight to combat compaction must go on, this is the message that must be made clear at all levels.

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