

Miracle Professional GREENKEEPER OF THE YEAR

which Mike has developed and the high degree of record keeping which he feels went a long way to getting him the award.

"The management want accountability so they are making me learn new skills on the management side.

The club has a central administration department which comes up with a format for all the record keeping which is used throughout the club.

"We can account for every hour which is spent on the golf course. At first that's a little frightening - a bit like a time and motion study but it's not like that at all. There are a lot of benefits. For example this year I argued to get a new bunker raker but the club wasn't too keen. Through running the budget management we came up with a labour cost of 1114 hours of bunker raking by hand and that it accounted for 20% of our time. Once they heard that they realised the importance of it and we got our new bunker raker.

"Initially I felt that the time filling in forms would be better spent out on the course. I was a hands on person, 'let's get out there' lead by example type but I've come to appreciate the benefits of good management.

"We have a weekly staff meeting which is very open and if it's felt I'm not doing something right they tell me. That goes right through the club, everyone is on first name terms, even the Managing Director, and it's a lovely atmosphere to work in.

"We're all cogs in a wheel and there is no 'them and us' attitude which a lot of greenkeepers at big clubs suffer from."

If Mike's handicap had continued to fall he might have been rivalling Colin Montgomerie for the Golfer of the Year and not the Greenkeeper of the Year title.

"I started off at Macclesfield Golf Club but I was initially more concerned with trying to develop my golf game as it was my ambition to make it as a professional but it was not to be.

"I did get the opportunity to work on the course and I got more into the greenkeeping side and my golf fell away."

From Macclesfield Mike went



At the awards presentation, from left: Pat Murphy, Richard Minton, Chris Brook, Ed McCabe, James Devlin, Don Wilson, Mike Goodhind and Roger Mossop

as a trainee to Prestbury rising to First Assistant and worked under one of the old school of greenkeepers John Leonard. "From a practical side I couldn't have had a better tutor."

"I left there at 21 and went to Heaton Moors in Manchester as Head Greenkeeper. It was an ideal place to go because it was a step up for me and a place where I could learn from my mistakes."

In 1984 Mike went to Cavendish Golf Club in Buxton Derbyshire as Course Manager where he spent nine extremely enjoyable years.

"It was a very high golf course and the first winter I was there I didn't see a blade of grass from the first week in January to the last week in February."

That brought in the course's other use, that of ski centre.

"We had three ski tows on the course and had a run known as the Cresta Run which is world famous in that part of Derbyshire. It ran over three fairways and finished in a stream. I developed my skiing skills while at Cavendish and it was a super club to work for, extremely friendly.

"It was a real wrench to leave and I had to give it a great deal of thought. I'd built new sheds, new workshop and all the lads had uniforms. I'd built it all up and I could take pride in what we'd achieved. Everyone knew what they were doing and it almost took care of itself so really if you feel like that it's time for a new challenge."

The Tytherington Club was back in Macclesfield and Mike could see how the club was developing with the WPGET and professional Tour events.

"A major influence was the fact that it held major events and it was another step up the ladder."

The Ladies' English Open was

held on the course last year and it was another big step for Mike.

"It was a real eye opener with the television cameras there and the overall attention to detail. Fortunately I was given quite a bit of warning about what the Tour wanted and had quite a bit of input myself."

The club has an excellent internal training programme and Mike has already completed his D32 and D33.

"One thing which does appeal to me is the HNC course at Reaseheath College and if the club agrees I'd like to do it because it can be done on a distance learning basis..

"The way the industry is going nobody can lie still. The number of students taking the HND courses mean that all it needs is for them to get a bit of practical experience and I feel in ten year's time, probably less, they will be landing some pretty good jobs. You need the ability to think ahead and keep developing."

It is that sort of attitude which encouraged the judges Pat Murphy and Richard Minton who also visited the finalists courses, Roger Mossop and Neil Thomas to award him the prize.

"It is a prestigious award and I'm very proud for Karen and our four children Leah (7), Holly (6), Grace (3) and Callum (2)," said Mike, whose other claim to sporting fame is that he holds the record for the Cheshire Cricket League with the high score of 177 not out in a limited 40 overs game for Bollington.

"As for the future I've got work to do at Tytherington. It's still got a long way to go to fulfil its great potential and I want to be a part of that."

Roger Mossop, Business Manager for Miracle Professional, praised each of the five finalists and said that they were the closest matched in the history of the

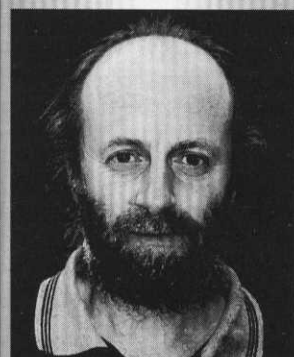
competition.

"Mike's course was excellent and his level of management and record keeping was second to none," said Roger as he made the presentation. "The staff facilities and the presentation of the staff pointed to an excellent team spirit while I was impressed by the fact that Mike seem to be well read on greenkeeping matters."

Roger also highlighted the plus points of each of the other finalists. Chris Brook's course was immaculate and he had the ability to take advice but ultimately make his own decision; Don Wilson's course was in excellent condition and he interviewed very well; Ed McCabe's sheds and record keeping were first class while James Devlin's greens were said to be the best of any seen in the competition, a feat achieved on a restricted budget.

The competition was given a further boost when it was agreed that Miracle Professional is to continue support of the competition in 1996.

MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS:



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- Dave Wood, Littlehampton GC

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A refund from the VAT man meant that many clubs in the country were awash with funds. Wolstanton was one which put the money to good use. Scott MacCallum reports.

The news was greeted with an amazement not dulled by the falling of the Berlin Wall, the dismantling of apartheid or England reaching the semi finals of the 1990 World Cup finals all extraordinary events from around the same time.

"Never in a month of Sundays...", "I'll eat my hat...", "Hell'll freeze over before it happens..." were just some of the incredulous remarks coming out of golf clubs when rumours reached them that the VAT man might just be handing back money after an EC directive.

Well I'm sure we've had a month's worth of Sabbaths since the rumours began and that milliners have done a roaring trade in smoky bacon flavoured boaters. I can't, however, vouch for the climatic conditions in Old Nick's back yard but all the same it was true and golf clubs, at least members' golf clubs, have been given a wonderful windfall.

The reason it happened is irrelevant to the clubs which are basking in new found riches but came about because as members' clubs they were entitled to VAT exemption on membership fees but had been paying it since 1990.

Anyone who comes into large sums of money has problems - or so I'm told. Bev Nicholson, that bloke who won £19 million on the lottery, Paul Gascoigne have all proved that money brought difficulties and golf clubs were no exception.

Who did it belong to? Or, to be grammatically correct, To whom did it belong? Was it the club's or was it due to the individual members who had paid the VAT on the membership subscriptions in the first place?

The best legal minds in the country were divided and it was left to clubs themselves to decide how best to cope with the best problem they had encountered in many years.

One club which was one of the earliest to reach a decision which was acceptable to everyone was Wolstanton GC in Newcastle-under-Lyme where the person with most to be pleased about was Course Manager, Bob Lupton, who has been able to improve the conditions of his staff and solve a long term drainage problem.

"It was always accepted by the club that the facilities for the greenkeeping staff were not very good from either a welfare point

THE VAT MAN GIVETH



Thanks very much: Bob Lupton, second left, and his team

of view and from the health and safety aspect," explained Bob.

"We basically had a dilapidated 50 year-old ex-Ministry of Defence building and while we had a flushing toilet, hot and cold running water and central heating we didn't have any showers and the general condition of the building left a lot to be desired."

It had always been intended that the facilities would be improved but that it would be as and when the money was raised by the club and Bob was told when he was appointed two and a half years ago that it was going to be done.

When it was discovered that money was due from the VAT man and the amount the club's directors sat down and wondered what was the best way to handle the windfall in fairness to the members.

Many of the members felt that the money was theirs and that it should be returned to them but there was a view that the club, as the receiving body, was entitled to it.

"We were in a very fortunate situation as we had all the individual records of members going back to the time in question so if required we could work out how much each individual was entitled to," explained Club Secretary, Mike Staniforth.

It was a task that is more difficult than it would at first appear

as the varying membership categories would have paid different amounts, some members were members at the beginning of the qualifying period but not the end and others joined midway through the time and only paid a portion of the recoverable VAT money.

The decision the Board took was a masterpiece and all members should be handed the task of conducting the Irish and Bosnian peace talks as quickly as possible.

It was decided that the money should be refunded to the members and, at the same time, impose a levy on them for the amount of money required to improve the greenkeeping staff's facilities and the drainage work on the course.

"We held an extraordinary general meeting where proposal number one was to reimburse the members to the full extent of the refund and then we had a director who very capably explained the reasoning behind why we need to spend money on the golf course and the second proposal was that we levy the members a certain amount of the money in order to carry out the necessary improvements," explained Mike.

"It was very cleverly done. We had over 200 members out of a membership of over 600 and the proposal was carried with a majority of around 95%."

Amounts vary but a full playing

member who qualified for the full period of the refund received around £80 as well as seeing the improvements to the club.

"The refund and the levy were done in conjunction with last year's subscriptions. Instead of asking for just a subscription without VAT we asked for a subscription, plus the levy, minus the VAT refund. It was an administrative nightmare but it showed everyone exactly what was happening," explained Mike.

The new greenkeeping facilities include a new £30,000 storage facility and a second phase which will be completed soon.

"This will have showers, toilets, drying room, mess room, office, workshop facilities and will cost around £40-£50,000," said Bob. "Had we had to wait until money became available it might have meant a four or five year phased plan and we may not have got as good as we are going to end up with."

"There have been no adverse comments from members at all because our existing building is on the way down to the first tee and they have been aware of our lack of facilities."

The influx of money has also allowed Bob to tackle a long standing drainage problem at the bottom end of the course.

The course borders the A34 with housing between the course and the road and the problems arose because the course sheds down to the A34 but the houses stopped drainage water going down and there was no access.

"We have now been able to gain access to the A43 through one of the houses through which we've installed a proper drainage scheme, but it's cost a lot of money to do this," explained Bob.

"The resident is not a member but we wanted to put a drain down his drive and he is getting a new drive and a patio and various other things out of the deal. All his legal costs have been paid by the club and it's not cost him a penny.

"We're not only solving a problem for the golf club we're also solving a problem for the residents whose homes were being flooded in winter time."

The total cost of the new greenkeeping facilities and the drainage scheme is in the region of £100,000 paid for entirely by the VAT windfall while the members also enjoyed a rebate on their subscriptions.

●How has your club handled the VAT situation? Have you benefited directly from it or has the money gone into other areas of the club or back to the members? Write to Greenkeeper International and share your VAT experiences.

Around the Green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

South Wales

A Happy new year to you all.

Huw Morgan, Course Manager at the Wilderness Golf Club in Kent kick started a busy month of lectures with an evening lecture at Pencoed College entitled "From the Wilderness to the Wilderness". You know you can always count of Huw to be controversial and as, true to form, he was.

Huw's talk was based on the main differences between managing a golf course in the south of England compared to that of south Wales. Huw's talk provoked much feedback and audience participation and left us with much food for thought.

The following Wednesday the newly-developed Celtic Manor golf and country club hosted a jointly organised STRI/WGU seminar entitled "On course in the 21st century". The seminar which encouraged an audience of well over 60 covered many topics including an in depth assessment of what the STRI is, does and is all about presented by the STRI's new Executive Director, Dr Mike Canaway. Other presentations were from Kate York - Diseases; Dr Bob Taylor - Ecology and our STRI regional Advisory Agronomist - Gareth Goddard. An informative day, coupled with a chance to see the Celtic Manor complex in all its glory.

The following day at the Parc Golf Club, Newport, Liquid Sod held a greenkeeper invitation day. The day consisted of a series of morning presentations followed by an afternoon round of golf.

The morning presentation made by the company's proprietor Jesse Johnson, an American agronomist, who stole the limelight with many interesting views and claims including controlling Take All Patch and an in depth look into the turf disease Pythium.

The BIGGA South West and South Wales Annual Seminar held recently at

Cannington College again was a resounding success with some 100 paying guests and around 40 students in attendance. A sincere thank you to the sponsors Barenbrug and in particular the ever smiling John Bradley, Area Manager of Barenbrug UK Ltd.

The region's policy at our seminar is to have two students make a 20-30 minute presentation and this year's students John Wilson and Mark Anderson were of the highest quality. Well done lads!

Other presentations came from Gerard van t'Klooster - an explanation of plant breeding and new cultivar testing. Mr John Linneker - "Golf Club Management" in his opinion. Dr Mike Canaway - a look at the continuing research work of the Sports Turf Research Institute. Dr Anne Maria Brennan, the EGU's practising Ecologist on: "On course conservation, golf and nature in partnership" and last but definitely not least Mr George Shiels - "The presentation of a golf course from an agronomists point of view".

An excellent day, thoroughly educational, and all for £10. What more could you ask for? Perhaps a better attendance from this side of the bridge!

Our sincere thanks to Cannington College for the use of their facilities, to Barenbrug for their support and sponsorship and to Gordon and Marion Child for their organisation of this seminar. Possibly the best yet.

You should have received a list of the winter evening lectures. If you haven't then contact me, but they are Pencoed College on Wednesday evenings commencing at 7pm. January 17 - Gordon Jaaback "Dispelling the myths in golf course drainage and overcoming the problems"; February 14 - John Moseley of the National Rivers Authority "Quality control, abstraction and record keeping"; March 13 - Bob Scott of British Seed Houses "Golf course renovation".

It's good to see so many new members not only joining the section but participating in events. Let's hope we see a lot more of you throughout 1996.

I hope Tony Bull is back on his feet, Tony of the Clyne Golf Club recently underwent surgery to remove two toes.

Fixture cards again sponsored by TACIT will be with you shortly.

Don't forget the BTME 22-26 January at Harrogate. See you there!
Peter Lacey

South West

Let me take this opportunity to wish all section members a happy, if not belated, New Year. A warm welcome is also extended to several new members who have joined the section recently, among them Steven Blackmore from Taunton Vale Golf Club, Robert Jordan from Puckrup Hall Hotel & Golf Club and Kenneth Abraham from Isle of Wedmore Golf Club. The section looks forward to your support at forthcoming section events, the first being at Stinchcombe Hill Golf Club on Wednesday February 28 where it is intended to

have a guest speaker as well as playing the usual golf.

All members of the section will once again be able to keep track of the year's events thanks to the offer from T.H. White to produce a fixture card for 1996. Assistance in every respect is always appreciated from trade members and thanks are once again given to Pat Smith and T.H. White for their continued support.

Throughout the winter months there is more opportunity at section level for education with, once again, what will be a full coach from the South West going to the BTME Exhibition at Harrogate on January 23.

A management course organised by Headquarters at a greatly subsidised price of £50 per head is being held at Thornbury Golf Centre on February 12 and 13. Frank Newbury is the instructor for a course entitled "Essentials for Busy Supervisors". The cost includes meals and one night's accommodation at Thornbury. To secure a place please contact Ken Richardson at Headquarters on 01347 838581.

It is the intention to run a Pesticide training course (PA1) in the near future with instruction being given by Noel Stevens formerly a senior lecturer from the Gloucester College of Agriculture. A venue and date are yet to be finalised but if interested in being included please contact me on 0117 9793127. It is worthwhile noting that a change in legislation now means that anybody wishing to use a knapsack sprayer now needs qualification to PA6 standard as it is no longer covered by the PA2 certificate.

Continuing with education, a First Aid course held on Tuesday November 21 at Filton Golf Club proved informative for those who attended. Don't forget for those who have already done the course that the certificate is valid for three years only before a refresher course needs to be taken.

Finally I close by wishing you successful greenkeeping and good golf for the forthcoming year.

Kevin M. Green

North West

An evening lecture and AGM took place at West Derby Golf Club recently. Clive Heginbotham of Miracle Professional gave a very interesting talk on the control of weeds in ponds and waterways. Clive stressed the need to consult the National Rivers Authority before using any products to control aquatic weeds but better still to contact himself as he could advise on the best products and who to contact. I would like to thank Clive for giving us his time and expert advice.

The AGM followed and once again we had a poor attendance with only 14 members. New Chairman Chris Sheehan presented his predecessor with an engraved tankard recording his two years as chairman.

The North West committee is Chairman, Chris Sheehan; Secretary, Bert Cross; Treasurer, Brian Moss; commit-

tee Howard McAddey, Stephen Outram, Bill Merritt, Alec Davies and Mike Davie.

A seminar at Mere G&CC organised by SISIS in conjunction with Rhone Poulenc was held on the evening of November 28. Head Greenkeepers and Green's Chairmen were invited to listen to three speakers, Martyn Jones, Myrscough, Dennis Mortram, Reaseheath and Mike Sheehan, Course Manager at Mere.

Mike Sheehan welcomed everybody and spoke about the problems on the golf course during the winter months. Points raised were: Use of winter greens, directing golfers away from worn areas which require renovation and generally keeping the members playing golf while essential work is carried out.

Martyn Jones, who came down strongly on the side of the greenkeeper, enlightened the audience of 112 on the problems greenkeepers have to face on a daily basis. Winter work he claims starts at the beginning of April and continues until the following March. In other words, all work carried out on the course during the year is done in order to create the best suitable conditions to allow members to play golf 365 days a year.

Dennis Mortram covered the various forms of aeration on golf courses, stressing how essential hollowtining, slitting and vertidrainage is to allow oxygen into the root-zone allowing deeper rooting and better drainage.

The evening was rounded up with a problem solving session with the panel of speakers. To complete the evening a hot pot supper and free raffle were provided. Many thanks to SISIS and Rhone Poulenc for organising the seminar with was well attended by both greenkeepers and greens chairmen.

I must mention that the N/W section have our own seminar at Mere on March 26 and I would like as many greenkeepers, greens chairmen and secretaries to attend. The theme of the seminar is "Forward Together", and is of interest to everybody in the business of golf.

The fixture lists for 1996 N/W section events are almost completed and will be posted to you as soon as possible. It just remains for me to wish you all a happy and prosperous new year and I hope to see you all at Harrogate.
Bert Cross

Scottish Region - North

The inaugural section dinner/dance in Aberdeen was a great success with around 60 people attending and a good time was had by all. A special vote of thanks must go to Hughie McLatchie and Dougal Duguid for organising this event which we hope will become an annual affair.

Our latest new member is one Mr Rust of the Eriskay Golf Club out in the Outer Hebrides. We hope to see him sometime. How about a section outing there!

As I mentioned last month the secre-

MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS:



"To have an average year without problems and no extremes in weather or greenkeeping conditions"

- Jean Esposito, Hinckley Hills, Ohio, USA

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aries duties were divided up among the committee so I thought it would be a good idea to list them with contact numbers. Chairman – A. Wilson 01356 625902; Vice Chairman and outings organiser – H. McLatchie 01779 470173; Secretary – D. Duguid 01224 740329; Treasurer – G. Moir 01334 474021; Education – S. Mcbain 01224 733347 and K. Peace 01467 623125; Raffle/prizes – W. Morrison 01224 826289; 200 Club and Magazine report – I. McLeod 01862 894402 and G. McKie (no number just now). S. Morrison 01224 705083 will soon become Scottish Chairman.

The reason for Gordon McKie not having a phone number just now is because he has moved to join Gordon Moir at St Andrews as Deputy Head Greenkeeper on the Eden Course. We wish him well. Robert Hardie is back in the area, welcome back.

the 1996 Hayter Qualifiers from the North section are as follows: Sct-9. B. Wood, Westhill; G. Mitchell, Newmacher; B. Cameron, Inverurie and A. Grant, Fraserburgh. 10-18. B. Cocker, Drumoig; G. McKie, St Andrews; K. Kinnaird, Grantown-on-Spey and I. Grant, Alyth. 19-28. H. McLatchie, Peterhead; K. Wood, Hazlehead; D. Duguid, Westhill and B. Anderson, Kings Links. They go forward to the Scottish final at Royal Aberdeen at the end of May.

I hope to see a good amount of North members at Harrogate this month. Mine's a Becks!

Finally the 1996 200 Club tickets will be on their way to your doors soon. Please buy some to help the section. Please return them immediately so that they can be sold before the first draw. Last year unfortunately we ended up with 10 tickets unsold which if they had been returned would have been sold and vital revenue for the section not lost. Please support your section – I'll get back down off the soap box now.

Iain Macleod

East Midlands

Our section AGM was held at Kirby Muxloe GC in Leicestershire on November 8. The day started at 9am with a phone call from Trevor Bennett who had lost all his balls (golf balls). This was quickly rectified by sorting out some old balls I had put aside for such occasions. The winners in the Texas Scramble were: 1. Dave Leatherland, Chris James and Antony Bindley; 2. Richard Barker, Roger Barker and Martin Smith; 3. Mike Billings, Brian Booth and Gary Thurman.

Moving on to the serious business of the AGM with the following members

Around the Green



duly elected to the committee. Chairman, T. Allard; Vice Chairman, D. Leatherland; Secretary A. Bindley; Treasurer, R. Barker; Committee members, G. Robson, P. Tatlow, P. Forshaw, A. Porter and G. Arnold. Regional representatives R. Barker and A. Bindley. I would like to thank our retiring Chairman Steve Goode for all the hard work he put into the section while in office. I'm sure members would agree that the section prospered under Steve's leadership.

Thanks should go to Kirby Muxloe GC for courtesy of their course and to the kindness and hospitality shown to us. Also I would like to thank Vitax for sponsoring such a fine prize table.

A cheque was also presented to our National Chairman Barry Heaney for £300 towards the BIGGA building fund. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Barry and Scott MacCallum for making the long journey down to Kirby Muxloe to be with us.

More golfing success was enjoyed for the section with Steve Goode and I finishing runners-up in the Ramsdale Park Society Open with a score of 63 Stableford points.

A snooker evening has been arranged for members on February 28 at the Willie Thorne Snooker Centre in Leicester. Any member who has not received a form can give me a ring and I will forward them a copy. Please remember to send your form back to me before the closing date.

A series of lectures has been arranged courtesy of Brooksby College for the benefit of all greenkeepers. The dates and speakers are as follows.

Thursday February 22, 7pm, John Bradley – Barenbrug UK Ltd. Cultivar development and modern seed mixtures.

Thursday February 29, 7pm, Stuart Rich – Hewitt sportsground. Aspects of modern sportsground and golf course construction.

Thursday March 7, 7pm, Howard Storey – John Deere UK. Machinery developments and mowing trends.

If anybody requires any further information on any of these lectures they can contact Ann Hurt at the college Tel: 01164 434291.

Antony Bindley

Cleveland

Our November lecture and slide pre-

sentation was by Gerald Brady of Rhone Poulenc Ltd on "Pesticides in Perspective" who explained the low risk factor of using modern pesticides and herbicides. Follow the label and we can have full confidence of success. He was thanked by Chairman Bruce Burnell.

Ian Pemberton has a new address and can be found at 53 Eddison Drive, Bedale, North Yorks.

Fertilisers of the future for golf greens need to be safe and of non-scorching quality. We have to apply while golf is still played. Slow release and or liquids must now have a use.

Askham Bryan hope to start a new course of three times one week block for qualified greenkeepers who want to be better mechanics on golf machinery. It starts in January.

For our spring golf event it is hoped to hold this at Roger Shaw's new golf course at Ramsdale Hall Hotel, Durham. This exciting venture is due to open in April or May.

Bruce Burnell

South Coast

Hello again. Well here we are at the beginning of another year with lots of things going on. It's only a couple of weeks to the start of BTME. This promises to be bigger and better this year and with most of the major companies exhibiting it is the place to visit. I myself will be looking forward to it and hope to see other members of our section there.

Our next winter lecture is on February 7 at 7 pm at Alresford Golf Club. The speaker will be Ed McCabe of Brockenhurst Manor Golf Club and his topic will be 'Communication'. This promises to be a very interesting talk so please come along, the more the better.

The South West region are holding three two day supervisory and management courses, in Bristol on 12th-13th February, in Plymouth on 14th-15th February and in our section on 19th-20th February at The Moat House Hotel Bournemouth. Each course is limited to 12 delegates and costs £50 per delegate, this includes tuition, meals and one nights accommodation, so book now.

Our first Golf meeting is the Spring tournament, which this year is being held at Crane Valley Golf Club on Monday, April 15 and is the qualifier for the Hayter Tournament.

This year's Hayter Regional Final is in our section, so we need to field a strong complete team. The venue is Salisbury and South Wilts Golf Club on Wednesday, June 12. We thank the Club for hosting this event and I know

Kerran Daly and his staff will provide an excellent and testing course for the days play. So please make a note in your diary.

Jeff Drake

Sheffield

A Happy New Year to you all!

On November 29 we held our Christmas Competition at Wortley Golf Club. Once again the course was in excellent condition and our thanks go to Barry Heaney and his staff.

The weather tried its best to spoil the day, but it was still very enjoyable. We would like to thank Wortley Golf Club for the courtesy of their course and to the steward and his staff for providing an excellent Christmas dinner once again.

Finally our thanks go to Rigby and Brian Booth for being our main sponsors and to all the other trade members who provided prizes.

Congratulations go to all the prize winners and to Sherwood Golf Club for making a clean sweep of the first three!

1. J. Cumberland; 2. K. Kirkham; 3. P. Lyons; 4.

D. Chappell; 5. P. Stain; 6. B. V. Lux

Well done to you all!

We hope to see you all at our next lecture on February 1 which will be given by Duncan McGilvary, Course Manager of Letchworth Golf Club, at Rotherham Golf Club at 2.30 pm.

John Lux

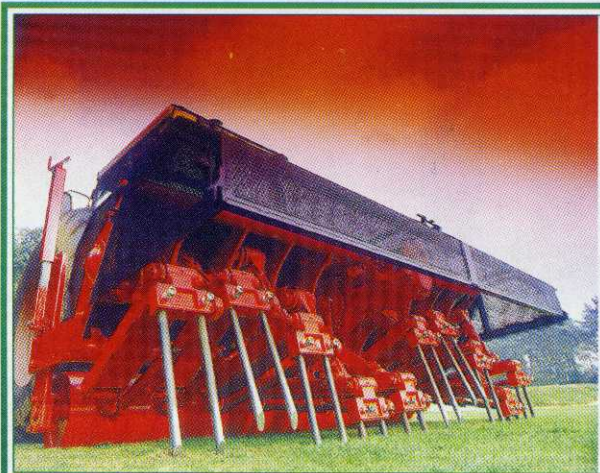
Devon and Cornwall

Happy New Year to all!

Manor House Hotel was the venue for our AGM meeting, which was held on Wednesday, November 22. The day started with golfing members arriving at 8.30 am to compete in the mornings foursome competition for the Toro Trophy. Unfortunately I was under the weather with flu and unable to share the delights of playing such a wonderful course, although this gave me the opportunity to join our none golfing members on the guided tour of the course by Head Greenkeeper, Mike Symonds, as always the walk turned out to be most informative.

After lunch the prize presentation for the Toro trophy took place with Alan Dommatt of Devon Garden Machinery presenting the prizes to: 1. E. Barber (Teign Valley) & C. Rawlings (Padbrook) 35 pts; 2. K. Piper (Holsworthy) & T. James (Tehidy) 4 pts; 3. L. Andrew (Ashbury) & P. Gross (Ashbury) 31 pts; 4. R. Ridgeway (Fingle Glen) & T. Hughman (Ashbury) 30 pts

Our thanks to Alan for donating and presenting the day's prizes, and to the Manor House management team for



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allowing the section use of their excellent facilities. Also our thanks to Head Greenkeeper, Mike Symonds, and his staff who had the course in excellent condition, hopefully we will have the pleasure of Mick's company at another meeting soon!

The section AGM followed the golf presentation and was opened by section chairman, Bill Mitchell. The secretary in his report thanked Bill Mitchell, Steve Evans and Gordon Child for all their hard work put into the section, region and national board over the last year. The secretary mentioned that Gordon was part of a brilliant double act with his wife Marion without their efforts our region would not be in the position it is today. The flagship of the region is Westurf, members must continue to support the show which will enable the region to continue its commitment to education. The secretary thanked Hennings of Cornwall for their donation towards the hire of the mini bus to the Hayter Regional Final.

Members were presented with the financial report which showed a profit of £258.49 giving the section a total balance of £1502.88. Approval of the balance sheet was proposed by B. Pile and seconded by G. Child, approved by members present.

The Chairman opened his report by thanking all the trade for their support over the year. The Chairman also thanked John Palfrey for his advice and Martin Hennings for his donation towards the minibus. The Chairman went on to thank President Alan Dommett for the wine with lunch at our Christmas meeting or was it the staffs! On concluding his report the Chairman thanked Secretary Richard Whyman for all the hard work he puts into the section and Gordon and Marion Child for their work in running our region and the Westurf Trade Show.

The President on retiring from office thanked members for their tremendous support, he felt that the trade and the membership are in partnership towards higher professional goals.

The election of officers saw Richard Wisdom re-elected as Devon committee member and as regional board reserve. Richard Whyman was re-elected as Secretary and Cornish committee member, John Palfrey was elected as President and Rob Guntrip was elected as a trade member. Any other business concluded the proceedings. Richard Whyman

London

The November winter workshop was attended by 43 people representing 23 golf clubs. John Allbutt kept everybody on their toes during his presentation.

His enthusiastic approach and depth of knowledge got through to everyone and I would like to thank John for his presentation. I would also like to thank Mill Hill Golf Club and the Grass Roots Trading Company for their help in the organisation of the event.

Our Turkey trot and AGM was held at Aldenham Golf Club in November. I would like to thank Mervin Downing and his staff for preparing the course. Although the weather was poor, the scores were impressive. The overall winner was Roger Mace with 36 points. Roger received a voucher from Rigby Taylor for a turkey. The runner up was Benjamin Knowles-Jackson with 34 points. The nearest the pin prize was won by Mervin Downing and the longest drive was won by David Kirk.

I would like to thank the trade for supporting us on the day and also for all their help in 1995. I would also like to thank Mrs Phillips for presenting the prizes and for allowing us to use the facilities.

The AGM went very well with no problems arising and the committee was elected as follows:

Craig Handyside, Barry Moggeridge, Don Wilson, Tony Dunstan, Ian Semple, David Kirk

Finally I would like to thank Jamie Bennett from Grass Roots and Barenbrug for the excellent weekend in Holland. Many local lads attended and the visit to the factory and breeding station was very informative.

The company organisation was superb and I would like to thank them for their hospitality.

Happy New Year on behalf of the London section.
Tony Dunstan

West of Scotland

Happy New Year to all! And best wishes for the coming season on behalf of myself and the rest of the West Section Committee.

A few things to mention, firstly the recent birth of Russell Lewis Jarvis, son of Gavin Jarvis and his wife. Gavin is Head Greenkeeper at Lenzie Golf Club, may we wish him and the family all the best and hope everybody is doing well.

Secondly, congratulations to John Scott jr on his recent appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Kirkehill Golf Club, on the other side of the river. The course is not quite as high up as Ferenze so a reduction in the oxygen intake may be required. Everybody wishes you well John, I'm sure you will do a fine job.

Finally the Annual Dinner held at the Admiral Bar proved to be a winner for a change, thanks are due to Roy

Auld and Steven Hogg for organising everything. Ronnie said the needful after a nice meal and handed over to Gary Davis to entertain for the evening. He completed the task admirably ha! ha! and the onlookers heartily enjoyed the one liners. Numbers were up slightly on previous years therefore it seems a lucky formula has been discovered. The results of the football will hopefully be available for the next issue. If anybody has information to be included next month please contact 0141 942 5554.

Once again best wishes and I hope everybody enjoyed their festivities.
Stuart Taylor

Midland Section

Firstly did everybody spot the mistake in last month's issue? Yes, I thought I would make the East Midland Section feel good for Christmas, by making them the winners of the match against the Midland Section. According to the Midland Team, this is the only way they would! Ha Ha! Belated congratulations to the Midland Team. Thank you Rigby-Taylor for their support. On the day, £100 was raised for the Matthew Fell Appeal. Well Done.

The Christmas Tournament was played at Worfield Golf Club, Bridgenorth, on December 7 1995. The weather was very seasonal with snow on the ground first thing. It was decided to play a 9 hole Stableford competition, with a mad rush to the Professional Shop for orange and yellow balls. The results were as follows: Team event: 1. P. Holtman, S. Mucklow, E. Thomas, B. Crowe; 2. M. Hughes, A. Ross, R. Stonebridge, A. Cornes; 3. M. Cutler, R. Thomas, S. Wenlock, I. Toon. Singles Cup - R. Thomas.

R. Thomas thanked everyone for attending, and thanked all trade members old and new for their support. Richard Minton presented the Christmas Hampers to the winning team, for which we thanked Miracle Professional Products. Thanks to Rigby-Taylor for the wine which they supplied for dinner, and many thanks to all the staff at Worfield Golf Club for their hospitality and assistance on the day.

Peter Jefford of Rufford Top Dressing presented R. Thomas with his prize. Unfortunately there was no prize for the last team, so N. Tyler missed out again! Other prizes awarded on the day were the Committee Cup, to E. Stant. Steve Blakeman from Rigby-Taylor presented A. Fellows and R. Quinne from Brocton Hall with the Rigby-Taylor foursomes Cup.

The AGM followed the meal with 36 members attending. The following

members were voted onto the Committee: President, R. Pugh; Chairman, M Hughes; Vice-Chairman/Treasurer, P Richmond; Secretary, K. Blake; Committee R. Thomas, E. Stant, J. Wood, R. Hayhurst, S. Blakeman.

It was lovely to see Reg Pugh at Worfield, after two years in which time he has been fighting a serious illness.

The first winter lecture will be held at Walsall Golf Club, on the February 14 1996 at 2pm. The speakers will be David Golding, from the GTC, talking about NVQ's and the role of assessors and Peter Jefford on Modern Standards on Top Dressings. See you there.

Finally, the committee discussed organising a Skittle evening in the early part of 1996. If you are interested could you please telephone me, and leave your name. The event will only go ahead if we have enough support from members. My telephone number is 01527 524217.
Kim Blake

Surrey

The first Winter lecture was held at Kingswood Golf Club back in November. The lecture was given by Gordon Jaaback on the subject of drainage. The lecture was well attended by over 30 greenkeepers we hope that a similar attendance or better for February 12 for the second Winter lecture which will be given by British Seed Houses at Walton Heath Artisans, 7.30pm. Not to mention a big thank you to Gordon Jaaback for giving this talk and thank you to Kingswood for supplying the venue.

On February 14 a coach has been organised for a trip to Ransomes, Ipswich. All interested parties should contact your section secretary as numbers are limited.

Congratulations go to Simon Osborne upon his appointment as Course Manager of the Wildwood Golf Club and also to Rob Budgen who was Simon's Deputy at Selsdon Park upon his promotion to Head Greenkeeper at Selsdon Park Hotel, good luck to the both of you.
David Gibbs

East of England

The last competition of the year was held at Belton Park with a very good turn out for a November day. The prize winners were as follows: 1. C. MacDonald, Newark Golf Club, 2. P. Fell, Aitkins, 3. G. Ogden, Stoke Rochford Golf Club.

There were too many prize winners to mention as our main sponsor Groundcare and John Deere provided us with so many excellent prizes.

After the competition we went

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*Comment From Walter Woods
St. Andrews Links Golf Course supervisor*

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COURSES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

straight into the AGM and the only new committee change this year was the enlistment of Phil Betten, Ramsey GC, everybody else still retain their posts.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the clubs for allowing us courtesy of their courses and a than you to all our many sponsors for their excellent prizes.

The new fixture cards will be coming to you soon as the competition schedule is now complete for 1996.

Thank you to Howard Storey of John Deere for his help in organising the cards.

The Winter education programme carries on from last year's success with John Hacker and possibly D. Walden giving a talk on various topics at Kenwick Park, Louth in February.

In March a tour of the John Deere factory is arranged and will incorporate a quiz or machinery workshop. (Dates to be confirmed).

A welcome to our new members who are: Steven Simpson, James Herring, Mark Hammond, David Elkington, Geoffrey Hill.

Your secretary has moved to the new post of Head Greenkeeper at Ryston Park, Downham Market, Norfolk, from Eyebury Golf Club which closed in September 1995.

Any more information on moves, promotion, etc, let me know on 01733 260297 anytime.
G A MacDonald

East of Scotland

Well welcome to this month's report the first of '96. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy new year and hope you all have a good one. So now down to business. In

Around the Green



November we had our AGM at Swanston Golf Club which was sponsored by Stewarts & Co who put on a lecture in the morning, a buffet lunch then we had a "small get together" in the afternoon for the AGM which was poorly attended as usual considering the membership we have. P. Ormiston stepped down after his two years in the chair and S. Dixon took over for his second stint as he has graced this position before four years ago. So best wishes for the future as Peter Ormiston stood down from the committee after a number of years. A good luck to Stevie for the next two as he will need it! Stevie picked one of the old timers as his vice-chairman Jimmy Neilson - best wishes to you. There was a space on the committee and only one nomination this was Mike Williamson, Torwoodlee, and he was duly elected. So we welcome on board Mike, see you at the first meeting.

In January the Committee now reads: Chairman - S. Dixon, Vice-Chairman - J. Neilson, Secretary/Treasurer - R. Hogarth, Messrs C. Yeaman, G. Wood, S. Greenwood, T. Murray, A. Forrest, M. Williamson. There wasn't a lot discussed so not a lot to report except our Summer half-day tournament returns in '96 and from 1997 our Spring/Autumn outing will be 18 holes only starting at about lunch time, so the members of the section can prepare

their courses before coming to the outing.

The Annual Dance on December 2 was a great success as usual with thanks to the Kilspindie House Hotel, Aberlady for a great night. The band was also excellent but as usual a small number had something to moan about and as usual it was the band. Well I, and the other 95%, thought they were excellent. So as the old saying goes, there is no pleasing everybody. So if you revert to a disco you will lose a big proportion of those attending who have supported us through the years, when you consider there were 15 greenkeepers out of 84 people in attendance. Any comments on the dance then let me know.

Events coming up are a football match on the December 8 at Galashiels, report next month, football match against West Section TBA, a lecture by Rigby Taylor and a talk on Conservation by David Roy, Head Greenkeeper, Linlithgow Golf Club on February 15 and a visit to local Toro Dealers A M Russell on March 14 at Roddinlaw.

BTME at Harrogate this month so see you all there. The Spring outing is at Longniddry G C and the Autumn at Murrayfield Golf Club which is celebrating its Centenary this year. The Summer Half Day tournament is at Inverleithen Golf Club, this is our Secretary's course so I hope the snow has melted by then! All dates in next month's report. There is also a quiz night at Swanston Golf Club on March 27 so put this in your diary and let's see a few more teams than all the usual. Here is the results from the Autumn outing that I forgot to put in last month's magazine from Prestonfield. Scratch - A. Holmes, Seahouses, 74 BIH. 1st Class - 1. D. McKenzie, Prestonfield, 74-6-68, 2.M. Pagan, Goswick, 75-4-71, 3. I. Bell, Glencorse, 77-5-72. 2nd Class - 1. S. Sinclair, Craigmillar Park, 85-14-71 BIH, 2. P. Hares, Newbattle, 82-11-71, 3. C. Pennyquick, Duddingston, 87-12-75. 3rd Class - 1. G. Hobbs, Bathgate, 90-20-70, 2. J. Thow, Goubeon, 90-18-72, 3. R. Hogarth, Innerleithen, 97-18-79. Best Nett - D. McKenzie, Prestonfield, 68, Veteran - D. Dugan, Glencorse - retired, 76, Trade - I. Thompson, Provan, 72, Guest - G. Moir, St Andrew Links, 77. Aggregate Spring/Autumn - M. Pagan, Goswick, 69/71.

Well that's it for the first one of 1996. Lots more to come over the coming months. Any info you have let me know. If there is anybody on the move, weddings, births, etc anything you want send it to me now. See you all next month if I survive a week at Harrogate.

We had a Christmas shopping trip to the Metro Shopping Centre in Newcastle (Gateshead) for the lads from the North East Section) on Sunday November 26. A great day was had by all 19 of us so we just managed to cover the cost of the bus. Better luck next year (we hope), as it is a good opportunity to do the Christmas shopping because it is all under one roof.
Chris Yeaman

Ayrshire

Our AGM was held on Thursday November 30. The attendance was slightly up on last year, but still disappointing given that we now have 100 section members. I am sad to report the death of one of our life members, George Alexander, who enjoyed a long retirement after I took over the Head Greenkeeper job at Prestwick St Nicholas from him in 1980. George had a long and active involvement with

SIGGA before and after his retirement, and I am sure his many friends will join me in passing our condolences to his family. A minute's silence was observed at our AGM to honour his memory.

The Spring outing has been confirmed as being at the Dumfries and County Golf Club on the April 25 1996, with the Autumn outing still to be confirmed. Details of both will be sent out in due course. A bowls night will be held in Saltcoats on the December 19 for the usual festive fare, results in the next issue.

A quiz was held after the AGM, with questions being set by Robert Bruce of Stewarts and Bob McKay of St Nicholas. After a closely fought battle, with scoring rather erratic thanks to thoughtful questions, the "Smart Alecs" (Duncan Gray and Harry Diamond) won in a tie break from the "Winners" (Jim Paton and Derek Wilson).

All that remains is to wish all our friends in BIGGA a happy and successful 1996 and hope to meet many of you again at Harrogate for the annual get together.
Duncan Gray

North Wales

It's the time of year when we need to know what's going on over the next few months. Well here it is!

January 10, Grasses Workshop with Phil Davies, Northop College; January 24, BTME coach available. Phone Brian Anderson for details on 01745 826695; February 14, Factory visit to GEM Pro with Terry Anderson; February. Details later regarding a seminar at Northop College on Golf Course Management; March 15, Dutch visit to Mommersteeg. See Phil Davies or Terry Adamson for details; April. Details later regarding the Hayter Qualifier to be held at Heswall GC; July, Hayter Regional final to be held at Abergelge GC - details later.

I will let you know of any update, changes and dates as I get them.

I would like to say thank you to all those concerned with the smooth running of this section this year and the many friends I have made.

Whether I am Competition Secretary next year or not I would like to say thank you to you all and wish you a happy New Year.
TP Evans

Scottish Region

The Region wish to extend their best wishes to Walter Woods on his retirement as Links Supervisor at St Andrews. After 22 years and four Opens Walter has decided to call it a day. However I am sure he will never be too far away from a golf course. We know that he is just retiring from his "day" job but the he will still be available to help and advise his many friends in BIGGA. For all the work you have done for the Scottish Region and BIGGA Walter, thanks again and we wish you and Caroline all our best wishes.

The Scottish Region Conference 1996 will be held on Wednesday March 6 at the Edinburgh Stakis Hotel at Edinburgh Airport. Speakers include Graeme Forbes, Managing Director Stewart & Co Seedsmen; Kenneth Gordon, Fil Pumps; Ian Henderson, Ian Henderson Finance; Andrew Laurence, Fenchurch; Steve Millar Oatridge College; Gordon Moir, Head Greenkeeper St Andrews Links; Iain MacLeod, Head Greenkeeper Tain GC; David Roy, Course Manager Linlithgow GC and John Souter, Managing Director, Souter of Stirling.

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Elliott Small

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Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

Happy New Year to all members. My aim in 1996 will be to continue to provide education and training opportunities for all greenkeepers by attempting to meet your needs. This year commences with The Learning Experience, in association with Ransomes, at Harrogate from 22 - 26 January. Details of speakers and their talks appear elsewhere this magazine.

BASIS CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POINTS

The Learning Experience, in association with Ransomes, is a must, not just because it offers the widest range of education and training to be found in Europe, give credits towards the Master Greenkeeper Certificate and provide evidence towards an N/SVQ qualification but also because BASIS has recognised the National Education Conference, Workshops and BTME seminars as meeting their requirement for awarding BASIS points. BASIS points will be awarded as follows:

- National Education Conference - 5 points
- Workshop 1 - 3 points
- Workshop 2 - 2 points
- BTME Seminars - 2 points per session

REGIONAL SUPERVISORY MANAGEMENT COURSES

In response to members' requests for more localised Supervisory Management Courses, I have arranged for two extra courses to be provided. These are Mildenhall on February 21/22 and Bedford on February 27/28. Please contact me for further details.

MIRACLES DO STILL HAPPEN

Well almost. At a meeting held at Aldwark Manor on December 5, the day following the very successful Miracle Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Competition 1995, it was decided that the competition would continue for at least another year. Roger Mossop and Richard Minton, from Miracle, were very impressed not only by the quality of the five finalists but also by the standard of all the entries, which have continued to improve through the years.

As one of the original aims of the competition was to encourage greenkeepers to better themselves, through education and training, and therefore to improve the standards of playing surfaces, they felt that the competition was achieving its aims and, therefore, worth saving. The rules of the competition for 1996 and the prizes awarded will be very similar to 1995's and are:

1. Entries may be submitted by Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers, club officials, golf club members and greenkeepers who feel that their head man and consequently their golf course deserves to be recognised for achieving the best possible standards from the resources made available.
2. All entries must arrive at Aldwark

Manor by 31 May 1996.

3. BIGGA Regions will each select their three representatives who will progress to the Region Finals.

4. The Regional Finals will take place in June/July and will consist of a fact finding visit (course evaluation) by a Regional evaluator who will be accompanied by a previous Premier Greenkeeper Finalist. They will select their Region's representative to progress to the National Final.

5. The five finalists will have their courses evaluated by a member of the BIGGA board, accompanied by a representative of Miracle Professional, during August/September 1996 prior to the final interviews taking place on December 8/9.

The prizes for the Competition will be:

Miracle Professional Premier Greenkeeper will receive a plaque, will be offered the chance to attend the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show in Las Vegas in February 1997 and will be presented with a cheque for £500 for his greenkeeping team.

The runner-up will receive a plaque and an all expenses paid London Weekend Break, for two, which includes the chance to see a West End show.

Third place will receive a plaque and an all expenses paid Weekend Break for two. Fourth and fifth will both receive a plaque.

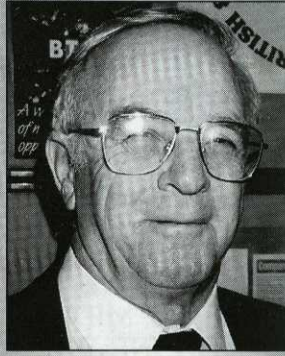
Remember, your course does not necessarily need to be another Augusta National. The judges are looking to see that you are getting the best out of your course, your staff and your

machinery, given a set amount of resources. Give it a try, you might even win.

LATEST BIGGA TRAINING VIDEO ON SALE AT BTME

The latest BIGGA training video titled 'Golf Green Reconstruction' will be on sale at BTME. The video shows some of the problems that may occur with greens, discusses some remedies and concentrates on green replacement. At £14.95 for members and £29.95 for non-members this 15 minute video represents superb value and should not be missed.

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