

Within the next few weeks it is intended to supply, 'as with last year, a note on all events run by the Section. All football connections are to be organised by Brian Hillan, of Drumpellier GC – those interested should contact him on 01236 434323.

That's all folks – please contact me with your information or ideas.

Stuart Taylor

NORTHERN REGION

Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North West

The Christmas golf competition was played at Wilmslow GC, on November 27, and was well attended with 44 competitors including one or two guests. After a wet start to the day the light rain stopped before the first game out at 10am and although the day remained overcast everybody completed their game in dry conditions. The course was in great condition for the time of the year thanks to Steve Oultram and his staff and although he had us playing off the "Open qualifier" tees some reasonable scores were returned. The first and second places were won by Andrew Cornes and Bill Merritt but everybody collected a prize even if it was their own bottle. Many thanks to the trade who kindly donated prizes for the Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive competitions. These companies were Farmura, Burrows, Pattissons, Ritefeed, Richard Campey, Martin Bros and Acorn UK. The golf was followed by the Annual General Meeting which was attended by 27 members. The statement of accounts was accepted by the membership and the committee who had pledged to stand for a further year were voted on en-bloc. Chris Sheehan stood down from being Chairman for the last two years and handed over the chairmanship to Steve Oultram. The North West Section committee are Chairman – Steve Oultram, Vice Chairman – Alec Davies, Secretary – Bert Cross, Treasurer – Paul Pearce, Committee members – Chris Sheehan, Bill Merritt and Lyndon Smith.

The day was rounded off with a lovely Christmas dinner, mince pies and Christmas pudding. I would like to thank Wilmslow GC for allowing us the courtesy of the course and their facilities, Steve Oultram and his staff for starting work in the dark, Gwen Chason for a lovely meal and David for providing a great bar service and being so patient with the late gang.

I wish you all a Happy New Year and any news, please ring me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross



Sheffield

Happy New Year to you all!

On November 6 we held our winter lecture at Rotherham GC followed by our Annual General Meeting.

Our thanks go to Robert Laycock, Turf Consultant, for giving us a very interesting lecture on grass tissue analysis which was enjoyed by all our members present.

After the lecture we were introduced to our new Regional Administrator, Douglas Bell, who gave a short speech on what he hopes to achieve for the Northern Region. Then we held our AGM which was attended by quite a lot of our members but not everyone who attended the lecture.

It was passed that the committee stayed the same, apart from Steve Hurd who stood down. I would like to thank Steve on behalf of the Section for all the work he did on the committee. It was proposed and passed that David Chappell be elected to the committee. The committee is as follows:- President – Ken Arnold, Chairman – Neil Maltby, Treasurer/Vice Chairman – David Milbourne, Secretary – Ron Ullathorne, Competition Secretary – Barry Heaney, Committee Members – Steve Currie, Jeremy Duffield, David Chappell and John Lax.

Thanks also to Amenity Turf supplies for providing the raffle prizes, thanks Steve.

Congratulations go to Paul Neve who recently played in the Kubota Challenge and won both of his matches but unfortunately the greenkeepers came 3rd, well done Paul.

On November 24 we held our Christmas competition at Rotherham GC and our thanks go to Rotherham for giving us courtesy of their course. It was a very cloudy day but fortunately it stayed dry and was enjoyed by everyone who played. Our thanks go to David Chappell and his staff for the excellent condition of the course in such wet weather – well done Dave! Our thanks also go to the Steward and his staff for providing an excellent Christmas dinner which was enjoyed by everyone.

Our thanks also to Brian Booth of Rigby Taylors for being the main sponsor of the competition and providing some excellent prizes. Thanks also to the other trade members who provided prizes including Gem, Purdys, Aitkens, Henton and Chattels and Amenity Turf supplies. Some good golf was played and congratulations go to Colin Hopper who with 22 pts won the competition, well done Colin! The results were:- 1. C Hopper; 2. C Jessop; 3. S Currie; 4. D Chappell; 5. N Maltby.

The winner of the trade prize was Peter Fell, well done Pete!

Our next lecture will be on February 5 at Rotherham GC at 2.30 pm and will be given by Neil Baldwin, from Service Chemicals, (ex STRI).

John Lax

North Wales

Well this month has been very quiet, yet again. We must all be very content in our work and lives and nothing must have happened in the whole of the Section as again no-one has phoned with any information.

The Christmas competition and AGM was held on December 3 at Northop Country Park. Once again there was an excellent turnout with nearly 80 members and guests taking part in the golfing festivities, however I can't give you the results because of a stewards inquiry – too much Christmas spirit was it Terry?

I would like to express our thanks to Northop Country Park for inviting us, Ian and his team for the presentation of the course, after what had been atrocious weather conditions in the lead up to the event, and the Captain for presenting the prizes.

The AGM was attended by 33 members as well as Doug Bell, our Regional Administrator. I took the Chair in my role as acting Chairman and spoke about the events of the past 12 months. We have a situation in our Section where our golf and educational events are very well supported compared to most other Sections considering our membership is relatively small, but we didn't get one single form returned for standing for committee work. At the meeting Gary Edwards, of Old Colwyn, put himself forward to take on the Secretary's duties and he can be assured of all the help possible from the rest of the committee. However, we still need other members willing to take on committee roles, basically we need a Vice Everything to keep continuity. It is hugely important or the Section could, in a worst case scenario cease to exist! As I have stated before it is YOUR Section and it needs YOUR input.

The committee as it stands is David Goodridge, Chairman; Gary Edwards, Secretary; Trevor Johnstone, Treasurer; Terry Evans, Match Secretary; Stuart McCall, Vice nearly everything!, Carl Price and Alan Kift. Jeremy Williams and Simon Shakespeare have also stated that they will serve to learn the ropes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Terry Adamson for everything he has done for the Section over all the years, he has effectively been the main contact

point for all the membership and nothing has every seemed too much trouble. Without him the running of the Section would have been an awful lot harder. Once again thanks Terry.

Trade members are invaluable to us as representatives get around all the clubs and can pick up and relay information quickly and are a genuine asset so if any one of you out there fancies adding to your workload the committee would love to hear from you.

I would just like to finish by thanking the rest of the committee for all the work done over the past difficult 12 months and Doug Bell who, since his appointment has done an excellent job, and helped guide me especially, because God, I need it!

Dave Goodridge

Cleveland

B Skeen, Horticultural Machinery Ltd, has gone out of business. Brian and Freda have been main agents and distributors for grass machinery companies for 30 years and have built up the biggest and most modern business in the North East. A major new development some years ago was followed by local authorities having to go out to contractors for tenders and these contractors took over a lot of councils maintenance work. This reduced the company's annual turnover and with increased market competition eventually led Brian and Freda to decide that enough was enough and ceased trading in October 1997. We greenkeepers have a lot to thank Brian and Freda for, they were always willing to support us and give us technical information about equipment before purchase and after. Our sincere thanks go to Brian and Freda for not only support but help. We wish you both good health and hope you do enjoy the retirement you both so richly deserve.

Ian White, from Middlesbrough Municipal GC; Geoff Ward, from Blackwell Grange GC, and Mick Dawson, from Eaglescliffe GC, are all on Level 4 NVQ Greenkeeping at Askham Bryan College and we wish them well.

See you all at Harrogate.
Bruce Burnell

MIDLAND REGION

Peter Larter
Tel: 01480 437507

Midland

I would like to start by wishing everybody all the best for the New Year ahead and trust all of you had an enjoyable Christmas. We can now look ahead to the annual trip to Harrogate and BTME and the usual high quality of the show and hospitality.



Around the Green



appeared with the scores although every score was just below par, the results were as follows:- 1. S. Goode, G. Robson, P. Fell, 64.4; 2. A. Bindley, D. Leatherland, T. Allard, 64.8; 3. K. Davis, G. Arnold, A. Mellow, 64.8. Our gratitude is owed once again to Vitax Ltd for providing again an excellent prize table. Thanks also should be extended to Greetham Valley for courtesy of their fine golf course which was in super condition. Also thanks to the steward and stewardess for a great meal.

Next year's AGM will be held at Lutterworth GC, on November 13, at 4.30 pm.

This year's Regional Seminar, held at The Saints Rugby Club, Northampton, was very well supported with over 80 delegates attending an excellent day. I would like to thank all the companies for their support to the seminar and to thank our Regional Administrator for all his great work on the day.

My two years as Regional Chairman have now elapsed and this position will go to the Vice Chairman, David Walden, at the Region's next meeting. I have had two really enjoyable years in this role, firstly being involved in the appointment of our Regional Administrator, judging greenkeepers and their courses for the 1996 Miracle award and representing the Region in the 1997 Kubota Golf Challenge at the Belfry. I would like to wish David well in his role as Chairman.

Anthony Bindley

BB & O

The last golfing event of the season was held at Richings Park GC back in November. Although the

weather was miserable the day was enjoyed by all with some very good scores posted. There were 13 golf clubs represented in teams of three but unfortunately the prizes were shared by only two clubs, Burnham and Beaconsfield:- 1. N. Storey, J. Brooks & D. Manning, 83 pts; 2. B. Payne, B. Payne (jnr) & D. Schillaci, 79 pts; 3. C. Lillitou, M. Skelton & B. Paterson, 79 pts. Nearest the Pin - B. Payne; Longest Drive - M. Skelton.

Thanks to GEM Products for providing the wonderful prizes and thanks to Bernie for his contributions once again. Many thanks to Richings Park for their hospitality on the day - the food was first class!

Congratulations to Phil Russell and his team for providing a superb test of golf, all who played were very complimentary.

The AGM was supposed to follow the golf but unfortunately had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. It is planned to send out a Chairman's report in the coming weeks with a balance of our account to date. In the meantime if anybody has any comments please put pen to paper to phone me on 01491 578147.

I would like to thank all on the committee for their continued support this past year, all of whom have given up their valuable time to attend various meetings.

Finally we would like to spread the golf days around the Section so if you fancy hosting one of these prestigious events then please let me know as soon as possible.

Lindsay T Anderson

SOUTH EAST REGION

Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

Sussex

Well, Christmas is over and the lucky ones are looking forward to a week in Harrogate, which if it is anything like last year, it will be a week to remember.



The AGM was held at Haywards Heath GC again on Wednesday, November 19. A total of 29 members attended which is an improvement on last year but still low considering there are 190 members. As stated in the last write up there are a few changes to the committee. Regretably, Chris Allen has decided to step down as Vice Chairman due to ill health. Raymond Day has also asked to be replaced after six years as Secretary. Stefan Antolik has vacated the position of minute/match secretary.

Members voted in are Jon Hill as Vice Chairman, Stefan Antolik as Secretary and Neil Cleverley as Match Secretary. There have been other members voted on to the committee and I will let you know their names next time. Can I pass on our thanks to committee members past and present for all their efforts and hard work. Special thanks to Sue Antolik for all the work and support she has given to Stefan and the Section over the past years.

There were some interesting discussions during the meeting including ideas for different types of social events to include non-golfing members of the Section, plus a possible open forum on education to be attended by representatives of local colleges. You will be notified of these when they are arranged. Hopefully we can attract some new faces to these events.

During the meeting Daniel Negus, of Wellington GC, informed us of the tragic death of Ben Deacon in a road accident. Ben, who was only 21, had worked at Singing Hills and Hassocks. Can I pass on our sympathy to Ben's family and friends, he will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

By the time you read this article, the Turkey Trot at Littlehampton will have been held. The results will be printed next month. The two best eclectic scores for the season, qualifying for free

There are some final winners of 97 which I need to mention and congratulate them on their achievements, these are as follows:- Ritefeed single's winner is Rob Shaw who beat Paul Loffman in the final at Little Aston. Rigby Taylor double's winner's are Steve Wood and Mike Hughes, who beat Nigel Couchman and Rob Shaw in the final at Woburn. The Gross Cup was won by Tony Cheese and the Nett Cup was won by Martin Jones.

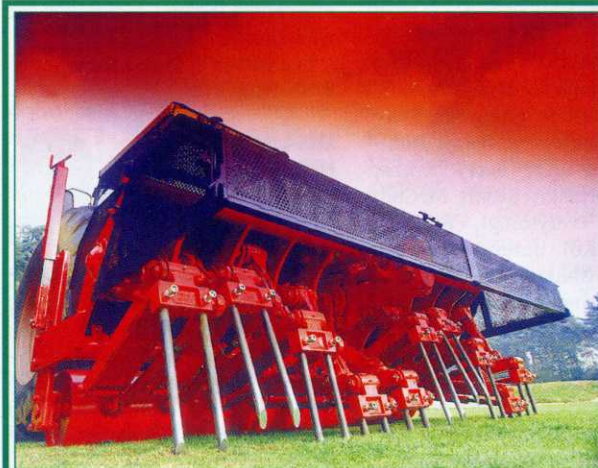
As this report has been written in November I have no details of new committee members and of the tournaments for 98 so I will keep you informed on these matters and indeed any other matters of interest in future reports and again I would appreciate any news or stories which you have which I can put into this report, my home number is 01384 292396.

Finally I would like to introduce some more new members - Ronald Wheeler, Benn Chamberlain, Malcolm Mitchell, Stephen Bernhard, Simon Hardman, Lee Mole, Matthew Turner, Nicholas Clarke and Jason Molesworth. Jonathan Wood

East Midlands

This year's AGM was held at Greetham Valley, in Rutland, on Bonfire night. Although only 25 greenkeepers were present the meeting was one of our longest at 57 minutes. I would like to thank our retiring Chairman, Tim Allard, for his two years in office and also welcome our new Chairman, Dave Leatherland. The Vice Chairman is now Gavin Robson and Richard Barker and myself remain as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. The Section also welcomes Kevin Davis and Steven Heap to the committee and would like to thank our retiring committee members Pete Forshaw and Paul Tatlow for all their work.

Before the AGM the day started with a Texas Scramble format golf competition. No fireworks



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entry to the competition are Jon Hill and Chris Reed.

If there are any Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers not at the AGM who are interested in gaining their D32/33 Assessor Training Award they can get more information by ringing 01323 763817.

The Spring meeting will be held at the Dyke GC and Slinfold Park GC will host the Summer meeting. We still need a venue for the Autumn meeting. If you can help us with this or have anything you want included in this column, please contact me on 01403 731567 (home) or 0589 531630 (mobile).

Colin Cathie

Essex

The Essex Section held their golf day and AGM on December 3, at Orsett GC. Thanks to Carl for the course and the golf club for allowing us to play – after snow the day before the course was in good condition. Thanks to Banks Amenity for the prizes for the day. Richard Price won first prize on a countback from Andy Sheehan, both having 39 points, but every player won a prize including: Guest Prize – John Taylor; Trade Prize – Edward Clarkson; Longest Drive – Richard Pride; Nearest the Pin – Lee Adams; Booby Prize (1 point!) – Andrew Wharton. Thanks to the trade who donated raffle prizes namely Rigby Taylor, Avoncrop Amenity, Tuckwells, Parker Hart, Grass Roots Trading, Edward Clarkson, Bourne Amenity, CMW and the Greenkeeping Supply Company. After the golf and prize giving we had a splendid dinner thanks to the caterers.

The AGM started at 6 pm. It was a very well organised affair and thanks go to the Chairman. A new committee was formed which is:- President – David Wells, Vice President – Andy Sheehan, Chairman – Carl Crocher, Secretary – Martin Forrester, Treasurer – Richard Pride, Education Officer –

Reg Hooker, Handicap Secretary – Mick Fance, Scribe – David Wells, Committee members – John Selwood and Steve Cox.

With a healthy bank balance we should have a good year. The golf days for next year are:- April – Burnham-on-Crouch GC; June 2 – Channels GC; August 7 – Thorpe Hall GC; August 26 – Stoke-by-Nayland GC (with East Anglian Section); October 7 – Maylands GC; December – Orsett GC and AGM. Our four major winners for last year were Richard Pride, Chris Ward, Andy Sheehan and Andy Toomes. The Golfer of the Year was John Selwood – well played you lot!

Just a few words about education in the Essex Section. Writtle College held its second meeting of the Sportsturf and Greenkeeping Industrial Advisory Panel on December 1 1997. The set up of the Panel has given vital feedback to Writtle College from us, the industry, on how we would like to see education progress. Topics for discussion included improvements to increase the success of the NVQ Level Two and the new HNC Sportsturf Science which can include NVQ 3 Sports Turf Maintenance.

For those who are looking to widen and increase their knowledge in grass science the HNC is ideal. You can join at any time as it is broken up into modules. For more details phone Stewart Brown, at Writtle College, on 01245 420705.

The education dates for 1998 are Tuesday February 3, Tuesday March 27 and Wednesday November 4, all at Writtle College in the main building, room L60 commencing at 7.30 pm.

There is also a one day supervisory course with Frank Newberry (limited to 12 places) on Tuesday March 10 at Stock Brook Manor GC.

That's about all for 1997. Hope you all had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dave Wells

London

Our Turkey Trot and AGM was held at Porters Park GC in November. The course was in excellent condition and I would like to thank Martin Smith and his staff for preparing the course. The rainfall did however cause a few problems for some of us! The overall winner for the event was Darren Jones with 39 points. In second place with 37 points was David Badham and in third spot with 35 points was Roger Mace. The result of the King Pin Challenge was Paul Burnham in first place with Peter Creeber in second and Roger Mace in third. I would like to thank Kings for their support throughout the year and for all their help at our events. The management at Porters Park GC must be congratulated for their hospitality and excellent catering and bar facilities. The golf events have all gone well this year with excellent support from the trade and indeed our members. Our fixtures for the coming year will be posted as soon as possible.

The AGM went very well with the committee being voted back en bloc. Our Regional Administrator, Derek Farrington, was present and I would like to thank him for attending. This year I will be handling over the Around the Green Section report to Peter Hopkinson, from Browns. He has kindly come forward to take over this duty.

I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year from the committee and look forward to seeing you all in the coming year. Tony Dunstan

SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH WALES REGION

Paula Humphries
Tel: 01363 82777



Devon and Cornwall

A happy new year to you all.

I hope you have had an enjoyable festive season which has recharged your batteries for another challenging year ahead.

The Section's first meeting of

the new year will be the Barenbrug Seeds meeting and will be held at Bude & North Cornwall GC, on Wednesday, February 4. The day will be sponsored by Barenbrug and hopefully the day will have something for you all. In the morning there will be a choice of 18 hole golf competition with the format being St Andrews foursomes or a workshop on Business Planning for Greenkeeping. Our afternoon seminar will continue on the theme of the morning's workshop.

Our Devon Garden Machinery sponsored meeting was held at Woodbury Park GC, on Wednesday, November 12. This meeting was also the Section's AGM. As always the day started with our golfing members competing for the Toro Trophy which was played in a foursome format. Our non-golfing members were treated to an excellent guided tour of the course by Course Manager, Jeff Mills, nice to see you again Jeff!

After an excellent lunch Alan Dommett, from Devon Garden Machinery, presented the prizes on behalf of Toro and DGM and gave a short presentation on his Company. The results were:- 1. Richard Parker, Ilfracombe, & Andy Parker, Crediton, 36 pts; 2. Jonathan Mansell & Chenery, Woodbury, 34 pts; 3. Eric Barber & Nick Rourke, Warren, 34 pts.

The Section would like to express its gratitude to the day's sponsors, Devon Garden Machinery, for their support and to Mr Mansell for allowing our Section use of his excellent facilities and to all the staff at Woodbury for making the Section so welcome. Special thanks must go to my old friend, Jeff Mills, and his crew who had the course in superb condition.

The Section's AGM followed the presentation. The Secretary opened his report with the balance sheet for the year ending September 30 1997 and advised member present that the Section had made a slight profit over the

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

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financial year of £116.16. The Secretary felt that the balance sheet was self explanatory and invited any questions from members present, there were none.

The approval of the balance sheet was proposed by A. Parker and seconded by C. Gadsby and approved by those present.

The Secretary continued his report by informing members that he had resigned as Chairman of the Region with effect from November 11 1997. He also informed members present that he did not wish to hold any political position within BIGGA for the foreseeable future, but if the membership present wished he would like to continue to administer the Section affairs. He continued by thanking Section Chairman, Bill Mitchell, for his support over those difficult months and for his shoulder to cry on and to the many members who have supported him.

The Secretary felt that the Association must continue to go forward to achieve its main aim, which is education for all greenkeepers from Course Manager to trainee. This can only help greenkeeping to continue to become more professional and he pleaded with members present not to allow our Association to become just a golfing society as we would quickly lose our credibility.

The Secretary welcomed the Region's Administrator to the meeting. He explained that Paula had taken on the difficult task of continuing the excellent work Gordon and Marion Child had achieved over the last ten years but was glad to say that Paula has continued the good work and with her part-time appointment Paula has had more time to visit golf clubs to meet members at their place of work. He hoped Paula would receive the support that members had shown to Gordon and Marion.

The Chairman opened his report by congratulating T. Pipe on representing the Section in

Around the Green



this year's Kubota competition at The Belfry. He expressed his disappointment that no summer meetings took place and with the input of the Section Committee.

The Chairman moved on to the Section Administrator and recommended to members present that they should vote R. Whyman back into office. The Chairman informed members that R. Whyman is without doubt the finest Section Administrator and is held in high esteem by HQ. The Chairman then turned to the sad part of the report for him as he informed members present that he had resigned from his position on the Regional Board and as Chairman of Section due to the dispute which the Secretary had mentioned in his report. It had been a great honour for him to hold these positions within BIGGA. He wished BIGGA and the Section the very best of luck for the future and hoped that his successor will gain the same satisfaction he had. The Chairman informed members that he had always tried to represent the Section's membership and hoped he had done some good along the way.

Section Committee elected:- S. Evans, Chairman; T. Farkins, Vice Chairman; R. Wisdom, Regional Board member; C. Rawlings, C. Gadsby, S. Getson, A. Parker, Reserve Regional Board member, J. Palfrey, President 1 year term, R. Guntrip, Trade member 2 year term, M Samuel, Trade member three year term, R. Whyman, Section Administrator. Richard Whyman

South Coast

Here we are again at the start of yet another year. I would like to

wish all our members and all at Head Office a happy and prosperous New Year.

Last year was quite a good year for the Section. We had a good attendance at our Section seminar which was held at Sparsholt in February. The golf meetings have been well attended and the winter lectures were quite successful and attendance was up on last year. I would like to say thank you to all our sponsors and all the golf clubs who have allowed us the use of their facilities over the past year. Without these people the Section could not have been as successful as it has. Unfortunately I was not able to attend the Turkey Trot and AGM. I will give a full report of the proceedings in the February report.

Unfortunately after the up-side there has got to be a down-side. I am referring to Westurf. Our support of Westurf is not as good as it should be. Westurf is the one event of the year that keeps our Region one of the most stable Regions within BIGGA. If we do not give Westurf our full support things could change quite rapidly. Some of you are saying it's the wrong time of year, others it's too far to travel. The travelling part is no problem - a coach can be arranged. The time of year - whether this can be changed or not I don't know. A lot of things have to be taken into consideration. There are a lot of other events that have to be considered when a date for Westurf is being made. If you have any constructive ideas please let one of your committee members know. The whole object of the exercise is to get as many people to Westurf as possible. By more of you attending it is hoped to attract more members of the trade. We would also like you to bring along members of your committees, secretaries/managers and golf club owners. Please make a note in red in your diaries for Westurf on April 29 at Long Ashton.

On Wednesday, February 4, at

7pm we are holding our Quiz Night at Bramshaw GC. It was quite successful last year. Having said that we would like to see a few more faces there as there are quite a lot of new members in the Section. What better time to meet everybody! It should be a good evening so bring along your wives, girlfriends etc. If you can produce a team from your golf club, great. If you come on your own, don't worry, we will soon fix you up. You don't have to be mastermind - it's just a good night out. By the way, to put your minds at rest the questions will not be on greenkeeping!

On November 6 we went on our visit to The London GC which was quite an experience. The coach started off from Bournemouth, travelled through the Section and on to the notorious M25. Then it was on to Sevenoaks in Kent and our first introduction was the security at the gate, not the place where you drive in and pay your green fee. The coach then made its way along the road through the golf courses, the International and the Heritage, both long courses. There are 179 bunkers on the International and 79 on the Heritage. They are all steeply mounded and call for a lot of Flymo work. We were met by Steve Jones, the Golf Course Superintendent, who gave us an introductory chat while we had our coffee. This included a brief history of the courses and introduction of his staff of 29 in the winter and increasing to 40 in the summer. We then had a tour of the greenkeeping complex and when I say greenkeeping complex that's what I mean. A far cry from the greenkeepers sheds that we all know so well. The machinery complex was so vast that they could play basketball in there! We then moved on to the mechanics workshop and store where there was all the up-to-date equipment plus two apprentices. Next was the irrigation mechanics workshop and store. When we saw the irri-

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gation system and the pump house we realised just why an irrigation mechanic is required. Also in this complex was a laboratory where a young lady was employed carrying out soil tests and various experiments. We then visited the offices, all part of this vast complex. Here were the Golf Course Superintendant, two Head Greenkeepers and the golf courses Foreman. All the offices had up-to-date equipment for keeping accurate records.

We then moved out on to the Heritage course. The greens were sown with Providence Bent and were doing very well. Steve has two men for two hours every day Poa Picking to keep the Poa at bay! Two different men each day I hasten to add – nice if you have the staff to do it though I must admit it was paying dividends. It was very hard to find any Poa on the greens as they were in excellent condition. We then broke for lunch at the clubhouse which we virtually had to ourselves. After lunch we had a grand tour of the clubhouse including restaurants, card rooms, sauna, locker rooms, private function rooms and a whole host of other attractions too numerous to mention. We left the clubhouse and donned our wellies and ventured on to the International course. The greens were once again in excellent con-

Around the Green



dition. I could go on and on but there just isn't the space so it was back to the rest room for a chat and coffee. We then boarded the coach and were homeward bound. Everybody who went on the trip said what an excellent day out it was. Firstly I must thank Joe Paulin for inviting us there in the first place and also thanks to Steve Jones who spent the whole day giving the guided tour. Last, but not least, thanks to Huxleys Grass Machinery who sponsored the cost of the coach.

Just a last reminder for our Section Seminar to be held at Sparsholt College, on Thursday, February 26. Those of you who have not booked in it's not too late. Send your cheques and booking forms to:- Jeff Drake, 10 Coldharbour Lane, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 7PN, telephone 01722 503938. The cost for the day is £15 for members and £20 for non-members. If you have not received your booking forms contact Jeff who will post one off to you. Try to persuade your Secretaries, members of committee and golf

club owners to come along.
Ken Lodge

South West

November saw the South West greenkeepers visit Shirehampton GC in Bristol for our Autumn tournament and AGM. Shirehampton is a delightful course that has cleverly been shoe horned into a very small area. It especially suited my form of golf as I found I could drive with my usual military precision (ie left, right, left, right) and could not only find my ball but actually find myself on another fairway with a shot onto a distant green. Not that it made much difference to my final tally as I was, as usual well off the mark.

The scores were as follows:- 1. Michael Fawcett, 38 pts; 2. P Godwin, 35 pts (on the last 6); 3. P Garland, 35 pts, 4. M. Hillman, 34 pts (on the back 9); 5. K. Green, 34 pts who was making a welcome comeback to the greenkeepers tour. Nearest the pin was Niel King. The nearest the pin prize managed to raise £34.00 for our sponsor Rigby Taylor's charity. Our thanks to Martin Samuel for representing them. Our thanks also go the rest of the trade for their support, to Club Secretary Jeff Reece, to the Cornelius caterers and to the Steward, Harry Roberts. Also well done Head Greenkeeper, Chris King, and his staff for providing us with such excellent conditions on the day.

Chairman, Ivor, then gathered us all together for the AGM. This was a very quick and efficient affair. After the usual readings we were given our annual talk by Robin Greaves on what's been happening at Headquarters and there followed a small discussion on how we can save or even raise some funds to try and keep our finances in their present healthy condition. We then went on to the election of officers and unlike last year most of the committee was re-elected. However with Matthew Hawker taking over as Team Captain, Vice Captain was taken by Dave Bougen. Also, our Secretary, Peter Baynton, decided to relinquish his regional duties and so Ivor had decided to take on these but has had to step down from his position as Section Chairman. His spot was filled by Vice Chairman Chris Sealey and Chris's position was filled by the election of James Braithwaite. Confused? Well if you are then the new fixture cards will reveal all.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of all the Section on thanking Ivor for all he has done for us in his role as Chairman over the years. Well done Ivor, we all owe you a great debt of thanks. Don't let's all panic though. Ivor will still be with us in his regional role and

who knows we may yet see him re-elected to something when he has finished his NVQ studies.

A quick note now on the superb seminar at Cannington. Thanks to Paula on her organisation of this and also to Huw Parry of Cannington for chairing the seminar. There were some great talks, especially from Jack McMillan and his son Cameron with some slides on how to build a rubbish tip and call it a golf course and in the case of Cameron, how to take a rubbish tip and build a golf course.
Marc Haring

NORTHERN IRELAND

North East

Our first joint section meeting held at Greenmount College went extremely well last month. We had an excellent turnout of 107 attending the Fine Turf Management seminar sponsored by John Lindsay Professional Sports Turf.

We had a very enjoyable afternoon listening to Robin Blackford, Technical Support Manager, Hayter speaking on Safe Mowing Practices, Philip Baldock, Head Greenkeeper at Royal Portrush GC and North East Section Chairman speaking on Pests, Problems and Diseases, Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education Officer speaking on Reasons for Education and David Garland, Director of Operations at the PGA European Tour speaking about Life on the Tour and also having a look at some of the rulings that he and his colleges have been involved with. I must say that everyone found this most informative and entertaining. I would like to thank on behalf of both BIGGA Sections in Northern Ireland all the speakers for giving their time to speak to us and making the day an enjoyable one. I would also like to thank Pat Murphy, BIGGA Chairman and Janet Adamson, Membership Services Officer for helping us to organise our first ever Seminar. Finally I would like to thank John Lindsay for sponsoring the event helping to make it such a success.

At the Seminar, Greenmount College took the opportunity to award the NVQ Level II and GTC Supervisory Management certificates which were presented by Pat Murphy. This has been the first time that Greenmount College has run this course. Students study one day a week on day release for two years. "It was a demanding course and required the student to input a lot of his own time, but it was very enjoyable to do. All of us built up a good rapport with each other and made lasting friendships. The college lecturers are dedicated to the students and were prepared to do anything to help" said Eamonn Farrell.
E Farrell

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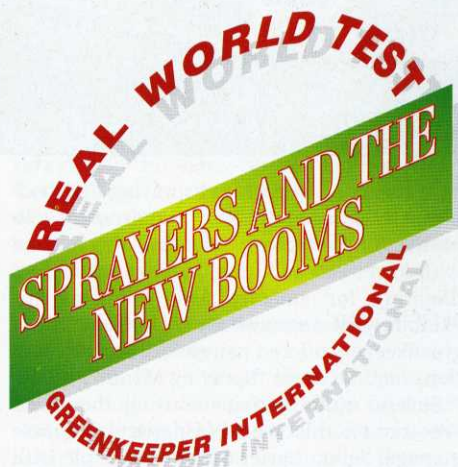
The AMK 600 and Rogers

Let us spray

by HUGH TILLEY

Spraying tends to be a non-preferred task – probably made so by hype about environmental and safety concerns and the need for operator training. This is not to say that these concerns are not real simply that they worry the greenkeeper and as a result he tends to use a sprayer as little as possible. And because a sprayer is used infrequently it has a low priority for replacement upgrading or maintenance which exacerbates the position. Nor are most clubs prepared to justify or pay for high specification machines.

While agriculture has a number of specialist sprayer manufacturers the position in the amenity field is totally different with just one main player and several other smaller ones although there are signs that several companies are looking more seriously at the golf market. Nevertheless current suppliers provide sprayers to suit most needs especially as sprayers are largely modular in design so that it is relatively easy to add sophistication or upgrades. It is also possible that an old



machine can be upgraded with new components although it needs a specialist to undertake this and often the cost makes it uneconomic.

Spraying tends to separate into two types of area, relatively small areas such as greens

and tees and the more extensive areas such as fairways, rough or semi-rough. There is also often a need to apply spot or localised treatments. For the latter a small pedestrian operated or even knapsack sprayer may be ideal, however, larger machines have the option to fit a hose and hand lance which can be used for spot treatment perhaps more conveniently – except that it requires putting a larger volume in the tank. Most greenkeepers seem to prefer a turf maintenance vehicle mounted sprayer for greens surrounds and tees although many use a small mounted machines behind a compact tractor. Such machines will work well enough on fairways although the task may be spread over several days thus a significant number of clubs now employ a contractor with larger equipment who will complete the task in a few hours. Using a contractor also has the advantage that you do not have key staff tied up at what is inevitably a critical time, especially as it is normally senior staff who are trained.

A growing number of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers realise the importance of

REAL WORLD TEST
SPRAYERS AND THE NEW BOOMS
GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL



accuracy and now use some form of bout marking. Adding a colourant to the spray is one method of seeing where you have sprayed, however reports of the success of this method vary. More generally acceptable is the use of a foam bout marker which leaves a line of foam blobs from the boom end – this may produce strange (even ‘worried’) comments from players – but they can be assured that the foam is less harmful than washing up liquid.

There are several important criteria to be met before spraying, weather is prime – minimal wind and no rain! and for many herbicides! warm growing conditions, this limits the time available for spraying very considerably.

Wind – and the resultant spray drift – is a problem which has been addressed by two manufacturers. Hardi import the Rogers Airfoil from Canada while Sisis have, with significant technical input from Cranfield University and others, designed their own. Both designs are shrouds which cover the boom/s so that the spray is enclosed and thus isolated or semi isolated from any wind. This has been portrayed as simple and very effective against high velocities of wind! However, it is not quite as simple as this and the booms are not cheap which may mean that multi course clubs and contractors are likely to be the first customers. As anyone who has waited for suitable conditions knows, the number of days available for spraying with a conventional boom is severely limited.

Most sprayers are remarkably tolerant to variations in forward speed – so long as there is a constant relationship between engine and forward speed, ie you always use the same gear – hydrostatic transmission prevents this. However, there are electronic controls which can be fitted which will relate forward speed to required output and match them for even, accurate coverage. Although such devices are not cheap, they are not expensive when related to the savings in time and effort offered. For hilly courses where it is almost impossible to maintain a constant speed they may be vital.

Weed Free of Bracknell – contractor

Founded in 1991 by Mike Seaton, and now employed by a large number of golf clubs, as well as other turf, amenity and industrial businesses, across the country, Weed Free has recently invested in a self propelled spraying unit to which Mike has fitted Hardi Windfoil booms. This has considerably extended his window of usage, and it also means greater certainty of being able to spray on the day specified. He can now spray almost irrespective of wind, although he still needs dry non-freezing weather, although he admitted that in higher wind conditions the foam blobs marks could get blown away.

The 5.5m windfoil booms are fitted to a purpose made ‘Spray Ranger’ vehicle – pur-

within a single day has great appeal, furthermore Adam believes that being able to apply in wind or even in light rain, and at night is a breakthrough and an invaluable commitment to the golf scene. Although he had not checked it out, it was Adam’s belief that the Spraying Mantis with its wide low pressure tyres was no heavier in terms of p.s.i. on the ground than a TMV sprayer.

But perhaps the most important aspect is that the unit allows Weed Free to agree a schedule with the Head Greenkeeper and be reasonably sure that they can keep to it.

Spraying Mantis at London Golf Club

Weed Free used the machine last spring to apply herbicides and insecticides on a considerable area of fairway, semi-rough and jungle rough at London Golf Club. Steve Jones – Superintendent at the 36 hole facility, estimated wind speeds as being over 10mph and this caused no sign of spray drift, and he was quite happy that it would work in considerably higher wind speeds. The club has its own ‘walk’ Wind Foil booms with a self-propelled Spray King for greens, tees and similar smaller areas thus the principle was not new to them. Powered by a 1800cc Ford diesel engine the machine had no problems in coping with the undulations on the course, the LH Agro



computer ensuring a constant spray output. As the machine was effectively a prototype there were some teething problem such as the boom skids marking the turf, and spraying commenced before the machine started forward, however, he is happy that these problems have been easily solved. He commented that the machine was extremely manoeuvrable, and that the ability to change rates and forward speed was very easy. Such abilities made it simple to match application to the conditions prevailing, and he believed that the machine was spraying at speeds of 7mph where ground conditions permitted this. Some spraying has been carried out at night using the ample working lights fitted to the sprayer. The electronic controls coped well with undulations and other speed

pose made for agricultural spraying but modified to Mike’s specific requirement. In particular this meant lowering the outline with lower cab and tank, making it look less daunting for amenity use. Following his exhibiting at Saltex many groundsmen and greenkeepers offered names for this combination – and he chose “Spraying Mantis”. Several clubs anticipate using the Weed Free service this year – in particular course manager Adam Carter of Clubhouse plc with Duke’s Dene and Nigels Golf Club courses, has been impressed by the concept and equipment although in the past he has been able to undertake most of his spraying using TMV mounted Hardi 300 sprayers. He commented that the ability to apply chemical to larger areas such as fairways and roughs



restricting factors. There was no criticism of the results and no sign of damage to trees or other surrounding vegetation.

Sisis Ecospray – pre-production

First seen at Saltex and then around the country at the Sisis Direct road show, the Ecospray is likely to be available this year in a variety of forms, all of which will be based on the five gang mesh shrouded boom from Spring 98. Each section encloses three 'bubble' nozzles and floats over the ground on small wheels. Overall spraying width is 4.03m. Outside units are lifted and folded in – and locked for transport.

Ecospray units are to be produced in trailed and mounted form, both with a PTO driven diaphragm pump, but are also expected to be available as 'boom only' to fit to existing sprayers and spraying systems, and suitable to fit behind turf maintenance vehicles such as Cushman, Workman or Huxtruk.

The original idea was conceived by Complete Weed Control of Stafford and Roger Turner who actually holds the patent. Roger's view was that today's amenity spraying did not allow for any drift, and he added that previous sprayers were based on agricultural design – where a limited amount of drift was not too serious. He took his ideas to Dr Steve Parkin at Cranfield University who, via computer modelling and a wind tunnel, proved the parameters for the design.

The prototypes produced as trailed machines with 320 litre tanks are due for several modifications in the light of greenkeeper and groundsmen's comments. Typical modifications are to the filling arrangements which will make the top filler more accessible and new wider wheels on the booms.

Plumbing includes a simple sightglass/ball monitor to indicate if any nozzles become

blocked as well as individual control valves. COSHH requirements are met with a clean water tank and dirty clothes locker. A hand lance is also standard to allow hand work around areas where the boom cannot reach, such as around trees and buildings

Demonstrated at Sandford Springs Golf Club in Hampshire on the Sisis road show in a high wind – using just water and a colorant before a large number of greenkeepers and groundsmen the machine attracted favourable comment. There was no sign of any spray drift, nor even of any significant amount of staining on the shrouds which would indicate vortex, turbulence or spray build-up inside.

Complete Weed Control are spraying contractors with considerable experience of applying in a wide range of conditions and locations. Roger said that in his experience the public have become very alarmed about all spraying. Using the Ecospray has allayed many of their fears, perhaps because they do not see it as a sprayer (and they don't see spray), and this view was borne out at Sandford Springs by one watching greenkeeper who commented, "you wouldn't have to put up the 'spraying boards' notice on the greens if you used one of those."

Hardi Windfoil at St George's Hill – Weybridge, Surrey

One of the first clubs in the country to use the Windfoil, St George's Hill is on extremely undulating heathland with 27 holes in a very sensitive environment surrounded by very exclusive residential property. In addition trees and woodland make for uncertain wind eddies and directions – thus the Windfoil boom was a 'natural'. It is fitted behind a Hardi 300 litre sprayer on a Cushman.

Andy Hall, Head Greenkeeper at St George's, said the boom which is in three sec-

tions and has 9 nozzles adapts to the contours very well. He considered it for its ability to extend the spraying window and he has used it with both herbicides and insecticides and found that it has given all the flexibility he was expecting. No drift has been experienced and the machine has been used in some very breezy conditions

Electric controls make for easy operation and the sprayer has been fitted with an inductor which takes the chemical direct from the container, rinsing it too, thus further reducing the hazard to the operator.

He used the term "flexibility" in several contexts, for not only has the boom given him flexibility in timing, but it has also given him greater control and accuracy in application. The three sections run on small coaster wheels and keep the nozzles at a predetermined height above the turf, in contrast to a conventional boom which can dig in or fly high on undulations, resulting in inaccurate application and greater drift.

Andy commented that because there is no drift, there is no smell nor pollution evident – and this is noticeable to the operator, golfers and anyone else in the area. It is his belief that such booms will become compulsory in future. The club is particularly concerned about health and safety and the environment. Andy admitted that spraying is a least favoured task on the course.

No problems in construction have been found, maintenance is rigidly adhered to with a thorough wash after use and a complete grease round the wheels, which, Andy has been informed, can seize up on their axles.

Both Andy and the club are happy about the investment, accepting that it is higher than for a basic sprayer, but Andy said, "we only got what we paid for – and I think we've got a 'Rolls Royce' in sprayers."

An environmental

Over the past 18 months a number of Scottish Golf Clubs have made use of the advice of the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Adviser.

One of the main roles of the post, which is funded by The Scottish Golf Union, The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, Scottish National Heritage and The Scottish Greenbelt Foundation, is to encourage and advise golf clubs to consider their contribution to the environment.

Of the 70-80 clubs to have contacted the Adviser, a number joined up to the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative. To do this they have made a commitment to produce an Environmental Plan based on the structure outlined in our recently revised publication, "Golf's Natural Heritage". The production of the

management plan essentially follows the following process:

1. Gathering information about the golf course environment, auditing current practices, identifying species and habitats, assessing historical and landscape qualities and features.
2. Evaluating and understanding the relevance of that information – and the interactive between environmental quality and golf course management.
3. Detailing future objectives aimed at maintaining and enhancing environmental quality. Most objectives also enhance golfing quality.
4. Implementing the objectives – possibly over a three year period.
5. Monitoring and Reviewing the management plans, and planning to the next three year period.

In the past few weeks Torphin

Hill Golf Club in Edinburgh, and Balnagask Golf Club in Aberdeen have reached the stage where their initial plan is produced and the resultant actions are beginning to be implemented. For this reason they have been awarded the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Charter – a certificate of recognition for their effort to integrate environmental issues into their day-to-day management and longer term vision for the course. Following on from Linlithgow Golf Club's success, these two Clubs will hopefully pave the way for many others who are close to finalising their plans. These other courses include: Hilton Park, Haddington, Mouse Valley, Drumoig and Silverknowes (Edinburgh City Council), Dumbarton, Cochrane Castle, Kilmalcolm, The Dukes Course and Loch Lomond.

In the case of Torphin Hill, the management plan has been driven internally by a team of dedicated members from past and present committees. A wealth of advice and support has come from the Edinburgh Green Belt Trust who have facilitated many large scale projects by securing funding. Indeed, having coordinated the species and habitat survey work, the Trust are now enabling tree planting and pond creating schemes to go ahead. *

Internal projects which will not require capital funding are being taken on by Head Greenkeeper, Rory Campbell. Grassland management for wildflowers, increasing the amount of rough grassland, sensitively disposing of cuttings and adoption of a policy for Integrated Pest Management are all being undertaken by the



An example of the threat to the heathland – gorse encroachment. Measures to control the spread of gorse and rank grasses are to be implemented. One of those measures involves reducing the amount of trolley damage to the heather stands.