

Euan Grant has come a long way in four and a half years and now has one of the most interesting and diverse jobs possible.

G Ahead of the Game



Above: The course is carved from a wonderful piece of land

Below: Euan Grant with Westerham Head Greenkeeper, Chris Moor



In the Assistant's Profiles which appear regularly in Greenkeeper International the final question, "What do you expect to be doing in 10 year's time?" invariably produces the response "Be a Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager at a top club," although occasionally someone says "Spending my lottery millions."

Euan Grant, the 1994 Toro Student of the Year, is well ahead of schedule... and some. Unfortunately for him he is not enjoying the fruits of successfully picking the same six numbers as those thrown up by Lancelot one Saturday night but that, a mere four and a half years after becoming top student, he is in

charge of his own 18 hole course. Oh, and he's also the man in charge of another 18 holer just about to open; Head Groundsman at two football training grounds and an advisor for two football league grounds. In total he has around 20 people under his charge.

When Euan first came to the green-keeping world's notice he was working at Effingham Golf Club but it was not long before he moved to take up the Deputy Head Greenkeeper's job at Royal Jersey, a links course which, as part of his master plan, was supposed to open the door eventually to him working at an Open venue.

He then received the telephone call

which was to drag him back to the mainland, amend his ultimate goal, and give him the sort of opportunity many more experienced greenkeepers would give their eye teeth for.

"I was in the Mess Room and someone handed my a mobile phone. The voice on the other end said 'It's Ron Noades here. I know you're coming over to Harrogate next week. Can you come and see me?' said Euan who admitted that, being a rugby man, he had no idea he was speaking to the famous Crystal Palace Chairman, and the man who after famously selling the club to Mark Goldberg, is now Chairman/Manager of Brentford.

"I mouthed the name 'Ron Noades'

Ahead of the Game

to the boys and when I came off the phone they, being football fans, asked if it was THE Ron Noades. I said I didn't know but that I was to meet him at Selhurst Park."

That meeting was to see him installed as Head man at the still to be opened Westerham Golf Club, near Biggin Hill, in Kent, and subsequently to be Clerk of Works and the man responsible for the successful growing in of the new and spectacular Happy Valley Golf Club, in Caterham, Surrey, developing the Crystal Palace Training Ground at Streete Court in Godstone, assisting with Brentford's training ground at Griffin Park, and Brentford's stadium.

Far right: A beautiful vista of Westerham Golf Club and beyond

Below: The Westerham greenkeeping team with Lossie, the extra member



When Euan started in 1996 he joined Chris Moor, then Deputy and now Head Greenkeeper, as half of a staff of two.

"I met Chris on site and had a discussion about how things were going and what we were going to do," explained Euan, 28.

"I had pages of A4 notes with questions I hadn't, at that point, been able to get answers to and we went through them all," recalled Chris, whose duties had included carrying bags of fertiliser on foot for up to a mile, returning for more, and then going round the green with a hopper.

"The two biggest hurdles we had to overcome was staff and money. We had no staff and no money. So we put a plan together and took it to Ron and told him that we needed to spend £250,000 straight away or he wasn't going to have his course open in a year from then.

"Ron is a very fair and reasonable man and although it took him by surprise he gave us the money and gave us the staffing," said Euan, who also appreciates the benefits of working for a football man for whom a quarter of a million represents the fee for a reserve goalkeeper.

They then head hunted some good greenkeepers, persuading them that Westerham would be a good move for them. The club started selling memberships and as it looked like a golf course, and a fine one at that prior to opening, 1000 were sold in about six weeks.

The course is cut from heavy

woodland, assisted by the great storm of 1987 when a lot of mature trees were blown down, and was planned out using aerial photographs and ordinance survey maps.

"There was a lot of natural regeneration over the 242 acres and we've done an awful lot of thinning of trees which were just six inches apart," explained Euan.

With Westerham on the right track, the excellent new clubhouse is nearing completion, attention was turned towards Streete Court, and Crystal Palace's training ground.

"We developed Streete Court which has five Premier League standard training pitches and six acres of formal gardens which we maintain.

"The pitches are sand construction with full irrigation, dwarf rye which we've over sown with fescue and it has established well. The first year was bliss, but then the players came down and anyone involved with football training will know what damage 70 people training seven days a week - because they've also got a School of Excellence at the weekend - can do."

Being involved in both greenkeeping and groundsmanship has given Euan an insight into what is required to achieve success in each.

"The general skills of turf maintenance are the same but the headaches are completely different. I do lots of aeration during the summer period on the golf courses, normally the final aeration we do is about October and we won't do any more until we start vertidrainage the

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fairways in March. That is pretty much the same with the football.

"The only time we have a worry is when we get a bit of compaction on the football grounds and we then choose the driest day to get out there and open the surface up."

With Streete Court on track, attention was then turned to the construction of Happy Valley Golf Club which if Euan and Ron are to be believed is on an even finer piece of golfing land than Westerham.

"It has been designed by David Williams who also did Westerham, and where Westerham is shorter and tighter Happy Valley is long and open. They're both going to be real tests of golf."

Euan was the Clerk of Works of the Happy Valley site ensuring that all decisions and plans were followed through and he ensured that greenkeeping staff were employed from an early stage.

"That meant when something was done we were straight on top of it to assist with the finishing off."

With three main sites in Caterham, Godstone and Westerham Euan spends quite a bit of time behind the wheel but it also has resulted in the employment of a mechanic, Trevor Tuppen, to work between all three sites. There is a workshop at each venue, and a driver, who works closely with the mechanic to transport machinery from site to site.

Euan is quick to attribute his success to education. He already had a degree in Sports and Leisure

Management when he moved into greenkeeping and is keen to promote the benefits of education to his team.

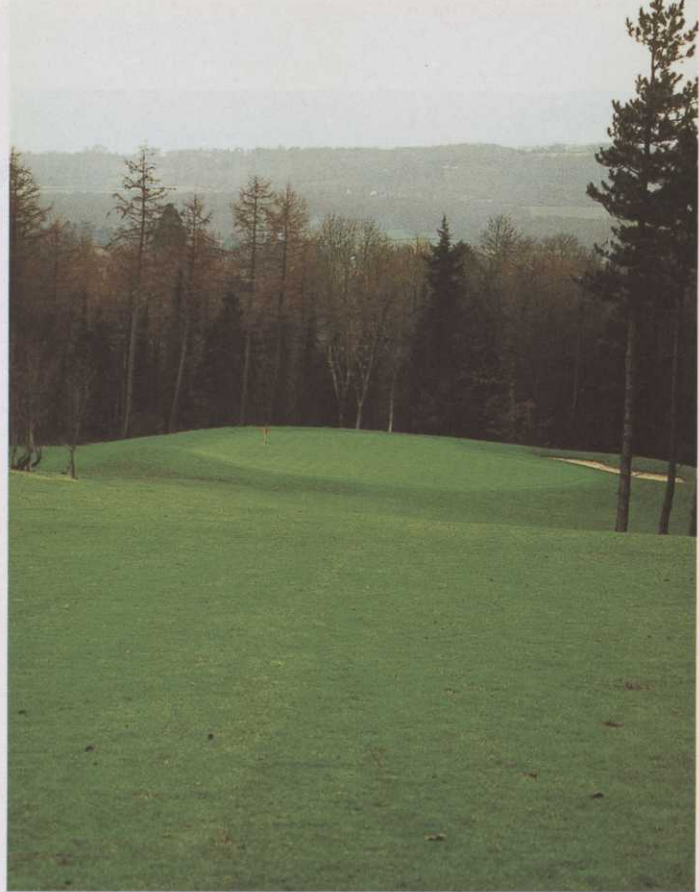
"I spend a lot of time looking into greenkeeper education. I do believe that the NVQ system is the way to go but feel that after Level 2 there isn't a great deal of scientific knowledge. I don't want to put a 19 year old lad on to Level 3, because I don't think he's either ready for it or needs the type of information that is being taught at that stage in his career."

Euan is therefore investing in more practical courses, covering among others First Aid, Chainsaws and spraying.

"We have a fairly formal education plan on site which takes the Black Book a stage further for the guys who have got Level 2. Chris, Mark Thornton (Head Greenkeeper at Happy Valley) and myself will get them to do not just what the Black Book says but how we want it done as well."

With regard to his own education, bearing in mind his role is more administrative and the time spent out on the course working is limited, it is perhaps surprising that he sees soil science rather than budgeting and managerial skills as the way he wants to go.

"The majority of my job is looking for ways to make the company as efficient as possible and it is not possible to do that without agronomic greenkeeping knowledge. I'm responsible to the accountant and to Ron and I'd really love to get them to some



BIGGA meetings to give them a bit of knowledge. They could then see where the money is being spent."

As far as the future is concerned Happy Valley opens later this year and Euan's job, which has just grown and grown since he started, will just

keep on getting bigger.

"Four and a half years ago I'd have been looking to have definitely been a Head Greenkeeper, or perhaps a Deputy at a top club," he said.

As I said at the beginning. He's ahead of schedule.

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Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
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North

Several new members to welcome this month. John Russell, Inverurie; Fraser Downie and Barry Edmonds, Hazlehead; Paul Robertson, Duff House Royal, and last but not least, James Brown, from the Strathmore Golf Centre. We hope to see you at Section events this year.

We welcome Willy Cummings as a Retired Member. He retired from Royal Dornoch last year but still wants to be involved with the Section. Congratulations to Gordon McKie, St Andrews, on winning second prize in the magazine competition for trips to BTME last month.

I really enjoyed the Patrons' Christmas Lunch in Stirling in December. It was nice to meet and chat with our friends from the Trade and thank them for their help in the past and, hopefully, the future. The ten lucky Section winners of the Patrons' Awards were present to receive part of their prize, a book and, of course, were at BTME last month as the rest of their award. If you want to be one of the lucky ten this year, all you need to do is support your Association as much as you can and you never know. "It could be you."

Well, it's that time again! You should be receiving your 200 Club tickets shortly (if not already). Please help the Section by purchasing one or two and help us to run the Section well. It's money from this fund-raiser that helps to keep costs down for our events. If for any reason you do not want your ticket, then please, please send it back straight away so it can be resold to someone as we must sell all tickets before the first draw at our Spring outing at Inverness Golf Club in May. We are grateful to Tom Brannan and "Greentech" for sponsoring this year's 200 Club.

I. A. Macleod

Central

The news front is rather quiet at the moment, what with everyone getting over the holidays and attending Harrogate. If anything newsworthy happened at the BTME, I will let you know about it next month.

Another two members join us this month, David McNeil and Billy Easton, who are both from Dullatur Golf Club, and we extend a warm welcome to them from everyone in the Section.

The proposed visit to Parkhead Stadium last month, again failed to happen, for reasons outwith our control, so all I can do is apologise once again and hopefully it can be rearranged for some time in the future.

If you wish to enter a team in this year's Inter Club Tournament you can still do so by forwarding the entry

form (remember! that's one of those pieces of paper you received last year and put in a safe place) to me by the end of this month.

Forms for the Spring Tournament at Lundin Golf Club on Thursday 29 April will be arriving with you soon, so if you wish to play on this superb course, please return them to me as soon as possible.

I was going through the Section Minute Book the other day and since the Section was inaugurated on 20 November 1980 there have been 13 Chairmen so I thought it would be interesting to see where they all are now. You will probably think this is a useless piece of information, but I will start by giving you the first five this month and the remainder over the next few months. I told you I was struggling for news this month!

80/1 Joe Oliver who was at Glenberrie GC and now at Pitreavie GC; 81/2 Jimmy Lees, was Grangemouth GC, now retired; 82/3 Bobby Fleming, was Dullatur GC, still Dullatur GC; 83/4 John Crawford, was Dunfermline GC, now Stirling GC; 84/5 Sandy Brown, was Crieff GC, now Australia.

John Crawford

Ayrshire

It is very quiet just after the festive period, no news reported last month. I've enjoyed the break by working a rota over the holidays, but it is back to the grindstone now and the first task will be the storm and flooding clear up.

We have lost a couple of mature trees, one of which I'm sure will have been well over 100 years old which is completely irreplaceable. But I'm sure there will be many worse cases than my own, having viewed the terrible damage around the countryside.

The Patrons' Christmas Luncheon took place at The Terraces Hotel, Stirling. The meal and entertainment, from after dinner speaker, former sprint champion, George McNeil, was first class. A big thanks to Peter Boyd for a superbly organised event. Derek Wilson and Marshall Sloss received their award with the other Section winners and congratulations to them all. The patrons were thanked for their continued support which make this event and awards possible.

It's off to Harrogate next and I look forward to meeting the Patrons' Award winners along with friends old and new.

If the magazine is published before Monday 8 February then all committee members are reminded of the committee meeting in the Parkstone Hotel at 7.30pm. Any news - call me on 01505 683278.

Iain Barr

West of Scotland

This month, members, very little has occurred but there are a few things to put in the diary.

In February a games night has been arranged for the 18th of the month at

the Claremont Bowling Club. Once again all are welcome. Early March is the Scottish Education Conference, again at Lauder College, Dunfermline, and if the last couple of years are anything to go by then they will be great talks. Later in that month the conveners match due to be played at Cawdor, but a date has still to be set.

A couple of other things to inform members about: last month I mentioned Scott Ballantyne and his wife were expecting a new arrival. A little girl was born two days after I wrote the article, Emma, and she was 7lb 6ozs. Best wishes from everybody. Another arrival: this time a trade member, Alistair Smith, of Vitax, has to be congratulated on the birth of a baby girl, Alice. Once again best wishes from the section to father, mother and baby.

Finally the Patrons' Awards were given this year to Charlie Goodall and Brian Hillen, both of whom were presented with their awards at The Terraces Hotel in Stirling just before Christmas. As part of the award they will attend BTME, so I hope they enjoy their trip, and hope they will contribute an article for next month. Finally, I say farewell as from now on Gavin Jarvis, of Lenzie Golf Club, will be writing the articles. Any information should be forwarded to him or any other committee member.

Thanks for all the help given over the years.

P.S. A game of football arranged for January will be reported on next month.

Stuart Taylor

East

Welcome to this month's column. As we are at a quiet time of the year there is not a lot of news going around so that is why it is a short column this month. The Section held its annual dinner dance at the beginning of December and what a great night it was. All 77 members and guests enjoyed themselves and danced into the small hours. Some people have already booked tickets and rooms for this year's event and we haven't arranged the date yet. There is space for more people this year so we hope to see you there and make it an even bigger success. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who sold the raffle tickets on the night, the dance organisers, the patrons, trade members and members who donated raffle prizes, also Raymond Binnie and all his staff at the Kilsplindle House Hotel. We hope to see you all next year.

P.S. Date of dance, tickets and accommodation for this year's event will be available soon. Watch this space!

The Section are playing the west section on Sunday 10 February in a football match at Almondvale Stadium (West Lothian Courier Stadium as it is now known) Livingston, so there will be a match report and photographs next month. I hope the bruises will have gone by the

time we go to BTME a week later. Joking apart, it should be a good game in the first meeting of the Sections. If you are going to Harrogate, I hope to see you there; if you're not able to make it this year, there will be news, views and gossip from this year's show in next month's magazine. I hope everyone's courses are recovering from the horrendous storms we had at the beginning of the year and there is not too much damage, as if 1998 wasn't a bad year. Hopefully this year we will get a hot dry summer which might help our courses to dry after the last 12 months. Here's hoping!

If anyone has any interesting stories or photographs from the storms in January please drop me a line and we will publish them in the magazine. You don't have to be just in the East Section, you can be from any Section, so let's hear your stories, to the usual address, thanks. Well that's it all for this month; next month dates for outings, social events and any other news. Cheers.

Chris Yeaman.



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North East

December 3, was the day of our AGM, held again at South Moor G.C. Our thanks to the committee for giving us the courtesy of club and the course. The usual turn out of approx. 25 members all enjoyed themselves. It's a pity a lot more people were not present as we have over 100 members. Just shows who are interested in the running of the Section.

Well, the AGM went through quickly (no one had any questions on the balance sheet), that was until we asked for nominees for the Section committee. Unfortunately only three people put their name forward so the original committee stayed on and the new members are as follows - Steve Pope, Craig Parkinson. My thanks to Doug Bell, the R.A., for giving us an insight on what he has been up to in the North East and the extra benefits we can get now.

Russell Black asked members if they would show their appreciation to Richard Creane who has been the Chairman of the Section for the past 16 years and now has decided to call it a day. The section will appoint a new Chairman at the next meeting.

Just a reminder that the February seminar will be at Tyneside Golf Club on the 25th starting 7.30. A buffet will be laid on free of charge.

Also thanks to Tony Chambers, the President, on presenting the year's trophies again and I hope he will return to South Moor in 1999.

Andrew Gunn, formerly at Hexham, has moved over to Matfen Hall as First Assistant. We wish him well and expect him to join as a member this year.



On a lighter note, I hope everyone had a good Christmas. I know we at Hexham did. All I will say is Hexham - 4, Ryton - 0. Can Pop Robinson remember what we are on about?

Don't forget the Spring Competition is at Seahouses in April.
Jimmy Richardson

North East

As you know the Spring Comp. is at Seahouses and all members received a time table for the year, but there has been a change of date for Autumn Comp. It is still at Carlisle but on Monday September 20.

The Carburol Knock Out will be only £5 to enter instead of £10 per couple. Anyone interested in playing give David Cuthbertson of Slaley Hall GC a ring, entries close at the Spring Comp.

Changes have been made to the section committee. Firstly Richard Creane has stepped down as Chairman as he decided that after holding this position for 16 years it was about time someone else took over. The committee and I would like to thank Richard for all the hard work he has done if it were not for him and other earlier committee members we would not be where we are today, considering that when we took over in 1982 we had only 20 odd members now today the number is around 120, but we still have a lot of non members out there.

The new Chairman is Steve Cram, of Slaley Hall; Secretary, Jimmy Richardson, of Hexham GC; Treasurer, Craig Parkinson, of Matfen Hall; Vice Chairman, Russ Black, of Westerhope GC. Another new member to the committee is Robbie Williams, of Slaley Hall GC. Some members might think that there are quite a few members from Slaley Hall but they are keen to help as we had little response from the AGM.

Another position that's been taken on is Captain of the Section. Brian Hughes, of Whickham GC has agreed to do this for 1999 we wish him well in his year of office.

This year we are going to run competitions during the summer months, probably June, July and August, but not teeing off till late afternoon. If anyone is interested in playing either let me know or see us at Seahouses in April.

Jimmy Richardson

Northern

Firstly, may I take this opportunity to apologise for there not being a magazine insert in last month's Greenkeeper International. I did write one out, but forgot to send it in. Sorry.

The 1998 Winter Golf Tournament was held this year at Keighley Golf Club. The weather had not been too good on the days leading up to the event, but it wasn't too bad on the day.

On behalf of all the competitors, may I thank the joint sponsors who were Pattissons & The Greenkeeping Supply Company. Everyone who played went home with a prize, most-

ly in the form of an alcoholic beverage! Thanks to Phil Palmer and the lads for their efforts in preparing the course and also to the caterers for the excellent Christmas fayre served up after the golf.

The 1998 AGM took place after the meal with 28 members attending. The meeting went relatively smoothly, with a few views being aired that it is hoped were not taken in the wrong manner. The main issue was that people who wish to participate in the golfing events must forward both their names and full payment to the secretary at least one week prior to the event otherwise they will not be allowed to take part. To enable events to be properly organised and run smoothly on the day, this must be enforced.

The committee elected for 1999 was as follows: President, Melvin Guy; Chairman, John Waite; Vice Chairman, David Thackray; Secretary/Treasurer, Simon Heppenstall; Members, Telford Jarvis, Dennis Cockburn, Richard Gamble, Gary Potter, Phil Mitchell and Richard Smith.

Events for 1999 have been arranged as follows: Annual Dinner Dance (Tickets are on sale from committee members), Bradford GC, Sat 13 March: Spring Tournament; Hornsea GC, Wed 14 April: President's Day; South Leeds GC, Wed 9 June: Roses Match, Howley Hall GC, Wed 18 August: Invitation Day, Shipley GC, Wed 8 September: Autumn Tournament, Bradford GC, Wed 20 October: Winter Golf, Fulford GC, Wed 8 December. Book early, as some of the events have limited places.

Anyone with any information from within the section please contact me at 1 Cockley Meadows, Kirkheaton, Huddersfield, HD5 0LA or phone on 01484 317813.

Simon Heppenstall.

North Wales

A Committee meeting was held on December 22 to discuss various items that arose at the AGM. All members will be sent forms for the spring meeting which is provisionally booked for Llanymynech on April 28. You will be asked if you are interested in the golf events that are organised, Please return your forms as we need to know who wants to play golf and who doesn't. Even if you don't wish to play in April but are interested in future events, return your form stating as such. We need this information so we can operate efficiently. If you are not interested in any golf events ever, then a form not returned will be treated as such. Please help your committee to help you. If you are unsure as to what I mean, please ring me on 01824 71093 or 0410 896837.

We still need courses to hold our golf events. Anyone interested, please get in touch.

A number of issues came from the Prestatyn meeting which should never happen again. Own drink being consumed, dress code and behaviour.

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Prestatyn have always been very good to us. We are supposed to be a professional Association and items of basic good etiquette were abused. My apologies go to the captain and members of Prestatyn and also to Dave Parry. Any member in future found abusing their privilege will be asked to leave the event.

One final thing with regard to guests. All guests must be golf related, ie. from the industry itself. Again, any queries please phone me.

There will be a lecture held in the college on water management and soil science one afternoon in March starting at 2.30. The date hasn't been finalised as I write, but everyone will be informed beforehand. Please, if you can, do attend and remember the seminar on February 17.

I'm sorry I can't give any of you assessors out there any info on the NVQ's as it is all up in the air and no information has come to me. When I hear, you'll hear.

At our meeting on December 22, our Competition Secretary, Terry Evans, resigned. If anyone out there is interested in committee work, please get in touch and we'll see about co-opting on. I would just like to thank Terry for all the work he has done for this Section over the years.

Dave Goodridge.

North West

I am sitting in front of the computer pondering how to start the Section news. Glancing back at the news from previous months, the weather appears to be the starting point and because greenkeeping is so much governed by weather conditions, 1998 has probably been the worst year for many years. Today is January 1 and I hope that this year the weather will improve and give us one of the old fashioned summers to cope with.

One of our members, John Berry, appears to have had enough of the British weather as John and his wife Jeanette are off to start a new life in Australia. We wish them all the best in their new venture and John has promised to keep in touch with me, so I will hopefully be able to report on his progress in the future.

I have just completed the dates and venues for the three main golf tournaments for 1999 and they are: Spring Tournament, Fairhaven GC, Tuesday, 20 April. Summer Tournament, Longridge GC, Thursday, 17 June. Autumn Tournament, West Lancs GC, Thursday, 9 September. The date for the Mere Seminar is Tuesday, 23 March, and this promises to be an excellent seminar with a full programme for the day. Fixture lists for the N/W Section events will soon be with you and I hope you will all support the seminar and the golf plus any other events throughout the year. I hope you all had a merry Christmas and all your wishes are realised in 1999. Any news or views, ring 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross



Midland Region
Peter Larter
Tel: 01480 437507

East Midlands

This year's Christmas Tournament was hosted by Charnwood Forest G.C. on 10 December. The format for the day being a 18 hole singles Stableford. Despite the weather turning wet later in the day, some good scores were posted.

Category 1. 1. R. Barker, Kirby Muxloe, 35 pts; 2.. P. Bertenshaw, Willesley Park, 32 pts; 3. A. Porter, Greatham Valley, 29 pts. Category 2, 1. G. Robson, Lingdale, 29 pts; 2. J. James, Scraftoft, 28 pts; 3. S. Heap, Forest Hills, 28 pts. Trade & Associate: Winner - G. Thurman, Charnwood Forest, 31pts.

I would like to thank Charnwood Forest G.C. for courtesy of their fine course and also to congratulate Tim Allard and his staff for presenting an excellent course in such difficult weather conditions.

Thanks should also go to the stewardess for a really great meal and to our very generous sponsor, Rigby Taylor. I would also like to thank all committee members who help to run this day's event, especially Steven Heap as starter. May I take this opportunity to remind members that if they wish to attend any Section event, their forms must be returned before the closing date and having done this, please make every effort to arrive on the day in good time. Although nobody was Bindleyed in the day's golf, not to be outdone, the quiz was won by guess who? A. Bindley & B. Booth. Thanks to D. Leatherland & M. Bindley for organising the quiz.

I would like to welcome the following new members to our Section all from Greatham Valley, Guy Boyd, Alex Wren & Daniel Wren.

Having missed out our Autumn Tournament sponsors in the December issue, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bank's Amenity Products for their continued support.

Antony Bindley

Midland

The Christmas tournament was played at Copt Heath Golf Club and turned out to be a great success. The weather was not kind to us but the course was in great condition and many thanks go to all the greenkeeping staff and to all the club house staff who were very hospitable to us.

I would like to thank Ruffords, Rigby Taylor, County Crops and Tacit for their support. The winners of the Texas Scramble was the team of myself, Andrew Corns, Alan Kite and Dave Gibbons. The AGM was held on the same evening and the committee members are as follows: Peter Richmond - Chairman, Alan Kite - President, and myself as Secretary.

Other committee members include: Tony Cheese as Treasurer, Rhys Thomas, Andrew Smith, Eddie Stant and Peter Holtham.

On behalf of Grass Roots Trading and Abbey Mowers I would like to thank everyone who attended the go-carting in December, sponsored by the above companies. It was a great success and it is hoped to arrange this again in the future.

We are hoping to arrange a trip to Rhône Poulenc in the near future and details of this will be sent to you with your fixture cards for the year.

It just remains for me to introduce some more new members and they are: Adrian Myatt, Trevor Simpson, Richard Tompkin, Stephen Skidmore, Christopher Young and Robin Bryson.

Jonathan Wood

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Mid Anglia

The Midland Regional Seminar was held in November at Mentmore Golf & Country Club, with a good range of speakers lined up for the day. Billy McMillan gave an excellent talk on "A Golf Course from Seed to Green", as did Eddie Seaward, Head Groundsman at Wimbledon, on the preparation for Wimbledon fortnight. Other speakers' topics included

"Bacteria in the soil", "Water Management" and "Risk Assessments." Bearing in mind the excellent programme, it was disappointing to note so few attending from the Section. Our thanks to Mentmore Golf club for kindly letting us use their excellent facilities free of charge. It is planned to use the club again for next year's event.

Our last golf event of the year, the

annual Texas Scramble competition, took place at Ashridge Golf Club in early December. Twenty six teams of four entered and had a great day's golf, followed by an excellent meal. Our thanks to Ashridge Golf Club, to Jim Cassidy and his staff for the course and to Colin White, of Avoncrop, for sponsoring the event once again. Colin is leaving our region shortly, so I would like to wish him good luck in

his new position and to thank him for his support of the Section over a number of years.

Thanks also to all the other Trade members, particularly Turners Groundscare, who kindly sponsored our "Golfer of the Year" award. The results of the golf were as follows:

1. J. Hatton, J. Moorhouse, L. Cant, D. Wright, 57; 2. R. Pearce, K. KcKie, J. Jenkins, P. Goodchild, 57.3; 3. D.



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Mugford, T. Adams, L. Chapman, G. Lyme, 58.3; Nearest the Pin: L. Cant. Longest Drive: Paul Goodchild.

The "Golfer of the Year" which is based on best finishes in the three major tournaments plus the Lodgeway Four Ball, was presented to Steve Mason, of Mount Pleasant Golf Club.

Events for 1999 include an "Open Forum" discussion event on Tuesday 23 February 'venue to be confirmed'. Topics suggested are "Annual meadow grass", "Better methods" and "Conservation." Please come along and have your say; the event begins at 2pm.

Alwickbury Golf club will be the venue for the Spring Tournament 'date to be confirmed'.

Paul Lockett.



**South West
and South Wales**
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01363 82777

South West

Chipping Sodbury was the venue for the Christmas tournament held on December 10. For many members in the Section, this was the first time they had played the course and there were a number of very favourable comments about its layout and condition. The course has clearly undergone a number of improvements including lake construction and better fairway drainage. Many people expressed a desire to play the course again, though possibly in a more favourable time of the year.

The tournament itself was an extended Fourball Stableford, and the results were as follows: 1. Kevin Green & Wayne Vincent, 39 points; 2. Anthony Knight & Geoffrey Ford, 37 points; Kevin James & Mark Ford, 34 points.

Thanks go to Clive Richards and his greenkeeping staff for getting the course into remarkable shape; Doug Bird the Secretary, for allowing us to play; the clubhouse staff for providing us with an excellent Christmas dinner, and also Phil Greenway and Roffey Brothers for sponsoring the event. Thanks also to all the local companies which provided the prizes for the mammoth raffle which followed the dinner.

The day itself was marred by some atrocious weather that clearly took its toll on the golfers. Indeed 1998 has been an unlucky year for BIGGA events with the Summer Tournament at Filton and the Autumn Tournament at Saltford being virtual washouts. The only event that I can recall stripping down to a tee-shirt and slapping on the suntan lotion was the Winter Tournament held at Bath GC on a sizzling hot day in February!

Lets hope for some good weather for the first event of 1999, which will be held at Lansdown GC on February 25. The weather can be quite blustery at

the best of times at Lansdown, so make sure you bring full thermal underwear protection and a flask of brandy.

Now, turning to education and training, there seems to be some confusion and uncertainty over the courses being run by the South West Section. Therefore I have drawn up an information page listing all the courses which we can provide to the members. This will include contents of each course as well as an approximate price. If you see a course you are interested in or just need some more information, telephone me on 01249-783382. Once we have enough numbers, we can then run the course. Hopefully, you should now have a copy of the course lists.

If you are thinking about a chainsaw course, we can run a one week course on chainsaw maintenance, cross cutting and tree felling. If you are not experienced in chainsaw use however, it is advisable to take a separate course on tree felling, as you will need as much time and practice as possible in learning the various felling techniques.

If you have any other ideas for education and training, please don't hesitate to ask.

Paul Cunningham.

South Wales

Apologies for no January notes, so it's very late but I'm sure you all had a fantastic Christmas and will have a great new year with us working towards the millennium.

The Christmas Golf Day and AGM was again a success at the Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club. Thanks to Mr P. Robinson and his staff for the excellent condition of the course. Thanks also to the Secretary and the Captain for the use of the club's facilities and not forgetting the caterers for the food. This also goes to all the trade for their continued support. K. Jones won the Golf Competition during the day; well done.

The 1999 Committee which was decided on the day is Chairman, David Ward; Vice Chairman, Mike Jones; Secretary, Peter Lacey; Golf/Social Sub Committee, M. Davis, A. Macleod, R. Hatcher, R. Paterson and D. Ward.

Our evening lectures at Pencoed College started in January with Richard Dixon from the Welsh Golf Union. This month's evening lecture on Wednesday, 10 February, by John Mosedale is all about quantity and quality and control measures of water.

In March we look forward to Derek Edwards, from Inturf, on Wednesday 17, and on Wednesday 14, April, us versus the IOG in our fun packed annual quiz. Please attend the evenings that are run for your benefit, with the bar at the college being open serving soft and alcoholic drinks; so take it in turn to drive.

Lastly, I'll bring you up to date with the BTME next month.

Richard Hatcher

Devon & Cornwall

Our P.J. Flegg Christmas meeting was held once again at Okehampton Golf club on Wednesday, 9 December. The day started with a slight hiccup as a few members arrived late, which meant that several pairings had to be changed for the greensome format P.J. Flegg Trophy. Our non-golfing members were as usual treated to the guided course walk by Head Greenkeeper, Richard Wisdom.

Both golfing and non-golfing were delighted to see once again the P.J. Flegg refreshment tent by the 6th green, inside Patrick and his staff treated members to snacks and drinks which set the Christmas atmosphere for the day. After an excellent Christmas lunch, the day continued with the morning's golf prizes for the P.J. Flegg Trophy being presented by Patrick Flegg to. 1., C. Rawlings, Padbrook, & S. Harris, Ashbury, 41pts; 2. A.. Parker, Crediton, & N. Rourke, The Warren, 40 pts; 3. R Parker, Ilfracombe, and T. Martin, Torquay, 39 pts.

A special prize was donated by Laurence Davis, Deputy Head at Okehampton, for the best triers and was presented by Patrick to C. Earnshaw & J. Farkins.

Our afternoon entertainment followed the prize presentation with the raffles concluding the day. The first raffle was for a free place on the Region's trip to BTME and was won by Andy Parker. Our second raffle was for two Christmas hampers kindly donated by Avoncrop and Peter Andrewartha with our final raffle of the day consisting of more than 40 prizes donated by members and trade.

The Section would like to thank Okehampton and all their staff who made our day so special, with a special mention to Richard Wisdom and his staff who as always had the course in superb condition. A big thank you to Patrick Flegg, and P.J. Flegg Ltd, for sponsoring the day and providing the wonderful snacks and drinks on the course. Also thanks to our new President, Martin Samuel, who supplied the wine at lunch. Also, to all of you who donated prizes for the day.

Dates for your diary, Avoncrop meeting, Wednesday 24 February, venue St Enodoc G.C., Rhone Poulenc & Supaturf meeting, Wednesday 24 March, venue Dartmouth G.C. Westurf Trade show at Westpoint Exeter on Tuesday, 27 April.

Richard Whyman

South Coast

Our Christmas Turkey Trot was once again held at Royal Winchester Golf Club on Monday 7 December. The overall winner was Trevor Smith, with 40 points. Category One winner was Bob Walker, with 36 points. Category Two winner was D. Northney with 34 points. Category Three winner was A. Doolan, with 32 points. Congratulations to all the winners

This was followed by Christmas Dinner, the Prize Giving and the

Raffle. At this point the draw was made for the free ticket to BTME. The lucky man was Peter Dudgeon, from Poultons Golf Centre. If you have not been to BTME before, I am sure you will not be disappointed.

On completion of the meal we had the AGM. The only changes to the committee was John York who stood down, and Ed McCabe who rejoined the committee. I would like to thank John for his input to the committee. The raffles he has organised at various events have helped the Section no end. With no financial input from Head Office, we have got to think of more ways to keep our Section solvent. Raffles at our events are a good source of income.

A presentation was made to Jim Fry, our President, who was made an Honorary Member of BIGGA. Jim is only the second person to be made an Honorary Member. I am sure the Section would like to give our heartfelt congratulations to Jim. If any man deserves this award Jim does.

Neil Thomas attended our AGM and gave us a complete update on what is going on at Headquarters. He covered a number of subjects. I am sure that our members are much more aware of what is going on within BIGGA. Thank you Neil.

Looking back through my records our first visit to Royal Winchester for our Turkey Trots was December 1988. Since then all our turkey trots and AGMs have been held there. I am sure that the Section would like to thank the Captain, Committee members and Staff who made us so welcome over the years. Their hospitality has been second to none. As usual the course was in superb condition and well presented by Phil Hanks and his staff. Thank you Phil. Thank you to the catering staff who made sure we were well fed and watered at the end of the day. Last but not least, thanks to our sponsors for the day. They were Sheerwater Leisure represented by Mark Wilton; New Forrest Farm Machinery, John Deere represented by Nick Clarke and Amenity Technology represented by Stuart Ashworth.

Those of you who have not returned your forms to Jef Drake for the Section Seminar, there is still time. As you can see some very good speakers are coming along. It looks like being a very successful day. The venue is Sparsholt and the date is 23 February 1999.

On 4 March 1999 our Educational and Golf Meeting will be held at Crane Valley Golf Club. Our speaker will be from Envirogreen Products. Proceedings will start at 10 am. This will be followed by lunch and 9 holes of golf. The day is being sponsored by Envirogreen Products. Everyone is welcome.

Our immediate Past Chairman of the Section, Alan Mitchel, has retired from the GTC. He has still not completely recovered from his illness. I am sure that the Section would like to pass on our best wishes to Alan. We all

hope that he continues to make good progress.

Another reminder for Westurf. As I said in last month's report, Westurf is moving to Westpoint near Exeter this year. Westpoint is a purpose built exhibition site. Because of this a lot more facilities will be made available. It should give Westurf a big surge forward. Paula, our Regional Administrator has put a lot of work into moving Westurf to Westpoint. It is now up to us as members to give our total support. A sponsored coach will be laid on for all of you attending Westurf. Please let Jef, our Secretary, or myself or any member of the committee know if you are attending. We can then arrange pick up points. For those of you who wish to make their own way, I am told there will be ample parking space.

Ken Lodge



South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

London

The "Turkey Trot" for the London Section was held on 17 November at Hanbury Manor Golf and Country Club. Unfortunately the weather brought a heavy frost and play was limited to a maximum of 13 holes.

However, there was a good turn out for such a prestigious course and while everyone was disappointed that the whole course could not be played, everyone made the most of it and had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

The scores were pretty close but the overall winner was Kenny (plus two) Mackay, Course Manager at Hanbury, and our host for the day, so that was nice. Second place was taken by Ian Semple, of Old Fold Manor Golf Club, just one shot behind! (which I think was the reverse of the result at the Buckinghamshire in the summer). Third place was secured by J. Haynes. Thanks must be given to Kenny for arranging the venue and also to General Manager, Alan Williams and Mark Newey, Hanbury's Director of Golf, for their very kind hospitality.

Congratulations to Ted Carley, of Harpenden Golf Club, and his wife Kathy on the birth of Daniel, who weighed in at 8lb 2 oz.

On a very sad note, condolences from all in the London Section to Dave Delderfield, of Grasshoppers Club, whose wife passed away after a long illness.

Work started in December on the construction of two new tees at Old Fold Manor Golf Club, the 4th and 8th, and also reshaping work will take place at the back of the 7th Green. The design work was carried out by Ian and his team.

News from Wyke Green Golf Club is that Roger Mace, formerly of Northolt Golf Club, is to join Tony Dyke and his team on the greenkeeping staff. A lot of you will know Tony Dyke for his ever

present wide smile and despite a very tough year, it's never slipped. Tony's wife, Pat, was diagnosed with a serious illness at the start of 1998 and has been undergoing gruelling treatment since last February. Pat has faced up to this with great courage and good humour and fingers crossed, her condition is improving. Tony and their children, Andrew, Lee and Amanda send Pat all their love and I am sure all in the Section will wish Pat good luck and good health in 1999.

Venues for the Golf Days have yet to be finalised as we are trying to get some new venues for the coming season. Hopefully by next month, we will be able to give you firm dates.

As you read this the BTME at Harrogate will have taken place and hopefully the event will generate some news and gossip for this column. Any tidbits gratefully received on 01494 782334 or 0860 618281.

Peter Hopkinson.

East Anglia

Christmas came and went. Hope you enjoyed it. I did, I think!

Our AGM went with the efficiency of a Swiss watch and the speed of the bullet train or should that be the Willitt (two t's) train. One of these days we will turn up, Ian will say "All those in favour say aye. Meeting Closed." Brilliant.

Old Greenkeeping Proverb: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." I wonder if the Greens Committees have heard that one. Mine have, several times.

Our section is going from strength to strength, thanks largely to Ian and Steve. Apparently ourselves and Essex are the two largest Sections of the lot, with us being the better organised, naturally!

Over 60 of us turned up at the Thorpeness Turkey Bash. "Bash" being the operative word. Sponsored by CMW we played a Texas Scramble on a wet but well prepared course, thanks to Ian (two T's) and his team.

First prize went to Ian (two T's) golf team. His party consisted of Thorpeness Managing Director, Tim Rowan-Robinson and Thorpeness Captain, Eric Duckworth with a net 61.7.

Greg McHugh and the Cowboys came second with a 62.1. There were four Nearest the Pin prizes on the 2nd, 7th, 10th and 16th which were won by A. Elliot, Steve Curtis, Peter Howard and Derek Farrington. They were sponsored by Rushbrooks, Sisis, Rhone Poulenc and Toro.

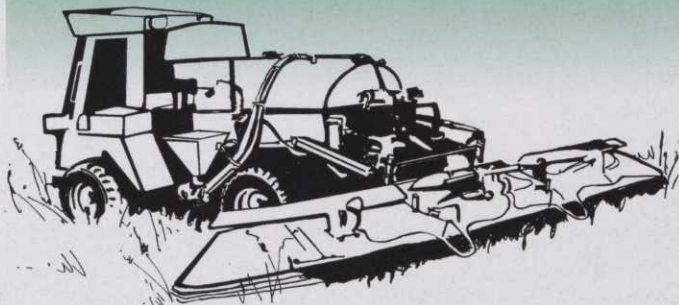
The Longest Drive on the 1st, and 17th were won by the same man, S. Bartram. I don't drive that far for my holidays!

Other sponsors were CMW, Rigby Taylor, Willmott Pertwee, Bartram Mowers, Ben Burgess, Consultant Clarkson, Pattisons and Colliers. Our thanks once again to all the trade lads, without them we could be struggling.

A special mention at the AGM was made for Colin Rushbrook who has been quite ill lately and it was good to see him out and about again, and Ernie Hart. These two guys have been spread-

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ing the East Anglian gospel. There was another award presented and nominated by Ernie to the Greenkeeper who goes about his job professionally and is a role model for all greenkeepers to follow. This award will be presented annually and as it has no official name, I think "The Ernie Hart Ambassador for Greenkeeping Award" will do nicely. Who won it? I hear you cry. Roger Eade, from Stowmarket, a very popular choice too I might add.

There are two new faces on the committee, Mark Broughton, who replaces Michael Peters and Quick Draw McGraw, sorry, Greg McHugh will attend Regional Meetings instead of Steve Millard.

That's all folks, except to say thank you again Thorpeness Golf Club, Hello Frank and see you in the spring.

Mick Lathrope

Surrey

Surrey Section held their 1998 Turkey Trot and AGM on 10 December at Clandon Regis Golf Club, near Guildford, and it was a pleasure to see such an excellent turn out. The weather was kind and only a few of the later starters enjoyed the slight rainfall of late afternoon.

Our Thanks and warm welcome to Steve Swanson the new Course Manager, for presenting the course in such good condition, bearing in mind the very wet weather all golf courses have had to contend with over the last year. The Turkey went to a noble winner, the First Assistant at Betchworth Park, Andy Gatland, and although his head-gear had a Mexican flavour, his 41 point win was most deserved as is his now reduced handicap.

The AGM was dealt with in a most efficient manner. The committee was re-elected with the exception of Mike Kirkham, our retiring Chairman, who we thank very sincerely for his commitment over the past years. Dave Delderfield and Ian Sellers are our two new committee members and we warmly welcome them to many years of service. Our last committee meeting took place on 11 January and all the latest information will appear in the March edition.

Chris Webb is now the First Assistant at Burhill Golf Club ably attending to the whims of the new Course Manager, Martin Smith, who has returned to Surrey Section after many years in the Midlands.

Although not strictly a Surrey Section club, Fulwell is so local that we thought the friendly thing to do was welcome Andy Johnston the new boss, and his four legged friend Tosh, into the area.

A belated but very happy New Year to all in Surrey Section.

Brian Willmott

Essex

By the time you receive this month's Greenkeeper International our first function of 1999, an evening lecture at Writtle College, will have been held. Thanks to our new Education Officer John Sinclair. A review will appear in next month's issue.

By the end of the month you all should receive your 1999 Fixture List Card, sponsored by P Tuckwell Ltd. Our thanks once again to Neil Peachey. Any problems telephone Martin Forrester 01245 603131.

As in 1998, we have a full programme of events, with record numbers of people supporting our Section. So, if you have not attended before, make an effort in 1999 and meet new friends who all work in the same harsh, sometimes lonely, environment.

During 1999 we are looking to hold further Educational Day Seminars, one being a two day computer course and the other, once again, a Management type course including negotiation skills and employment contracts and rights. These courses are a bargain price, for your benefit, to further our own individual skills in our ever growing demanding world. Your support will only make them viable to continue so look out for details in the post or contact Martin Forrester.

The format for this year's knock-out competition will be changed from a doubles event to singles. This is due to the problems occurring with organising matches last time around and hopefully, with fewer people arranging dates between each other, there will be no problems playing matches by the specified dates set by the competition

secretary, Richard Pride, 01268 752281. Details are in the post.

Finally I would like to mention the Industrial Advisory Panel of Turf Management and Greenkeeping which was held at Writtle College on 16 December. This is an important link in education for both Writtle College and us in the turf industry to try and set out future plans for what is needed regarding educational requirements.

Not quite finished. I'd like to wish both Martin Huckesbury, who has left Five Lakes to join up with Nigel Mansell, and Michael Fance, ex-Stock Brook Manor, now working for the Greenkeepers Supply Company, all the best in the new jobs.

Dave Wells. 01702 522202

Sussex

Sussex were indeed lucky with the weather once again. With courses closed and waterlogged all around them they were able to play their Christmas meeting at Littlehampton Golf Club on a day without wind or rain. Just fog!

David Wood had again prepared a super course for the Section, this being the eighth consecutive year that the event had been held there and the staff, under the direction of Secretary, Keith Palmer, always make us most welcome.

The results of the Texas Scramble are unimportant. It is a well known fact in Sussex that the Team Prize always goes to George Barr and his team, but on this occasion they did play well, winning it by two clear shots. No one begrudges George his victory. It is small recompense for the days he spends on "booze cruises" buying half of the French wine industries production in order that everyone attending wins at least one bottle of something. Even members of the non-winning teams walk out clutching several bottles of wine!

As mentioned earlier, the fog was a 'hazard' of the day. Being a links course, the tee-shots to the fairways were discernible by the hillocks on either side, but for the last hour or so of play, each team needed to send a 'scout' ahead to establish the general direction and a rough idea of the distance to the green. All in all a most interesting days golf which I think can be summed up in the

words of a guest overheard in the bar to say "It was probably the best day I have ever spent on a golf course!"

Derek Farrington

Northern Ireland

North East

Recently the GTC in the form of David Golding and Sue Gudgeon came over to see us and to train a few more assessors. We now have 25 assessors in Northern Ireland. The GTC are hoping that within the next five years there will be an assessor on every golf course in Northern Ireland. This is a major step forward in our industry. In conjunction with Greenmount College all students undertaking training will have their own work-place assessors. We believe that this is the way all training should be carried out in all industries. Greenmount College with Brian Corr and Neill McLaughlin has pioneered a new form of assessing students and monitoring their progress in conjunction with their work-place assessors. "This system is an example to all training providers and I would like to see this in operation at all colleges," said David Golding. Also now in place are three Internal Verifiers who will help to police the system. If any assessor has any problems please feel free to get in touch with the verifiers. They are Emmett Curran, Henry Farrell and Eamonn Farrell.

Congratulations to Larry Martin who moves from Vesta Irrigation to the Greenkeeping team at Stakis Park. Last but not least, best wishes to David Laird who has left J.E. Coulter to take up the Kubota Dealership now sited at Randalstown. Hope it all goes well for you Davy.

Eamonn Farrell

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