In a follow up to last month's article in Greenkeeper International on the the Valderrama Declaration and the Committed to Green Foundation, Scott MacCallum travelled to Dorking to meet David Stubbs, and discuss the issues surrounding Committed to Green...

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Greenkeeper International: Can you tell me about the Committed to Green Foundation and why the decision was taken to move on from the European Golf Association Ecology Unit?

David Stubbs: I see the new Foundation as a seamless progression from the original Ecology Unit, which had been going for the last six years. It started as an in-house environmental advisory unit within the European Golf Association, essentially to help the golf authorities gain a proper understanding of environmental issues and how best to deal with the green lobby. We first developed An Environmental Strategy for Golf in Europe (published 1995), and this led on to a pilot project on a sample of courses from all over Europe, with a view to setting up an Environmental Management Programme for golf.

Early on we received vital support from the European Commission, which enabled us to take the programme forward and establish what is now known as Committed to Green. In the course of time, it was felt by our main funding partners - the R&A, European Tour and EGA - that the best way forward for Committed to Green would be on an independent basis. A key concern is credibility. If golf is to gain public acceptance as an environmentally friendly activity, we need a clear, credible system to demonstrate what is being achieved. An in-house green label would not make

The new Committed to Green Foundation will, therefore, be an independent, not-for-profit trust, based in the UK but with a pan-European remit. We are in contact with the

Charity Commission to try to obtain Charitable Status. Although our environmental and educational goals are generally accepted as charitable, to confine our activities purely to golf courses would not be. A charity has to offer general benefit to the public as a whole, and golf is too narrow a field.

As it happens, over the last few years there has been an increasing debate within other sports about environmental issues. In some circles there is talk of a European green label for sport. Given all we have already done in golf, I think it is essential that we are active players in this growing debate. It will give our Foundation the necessary wider scope, and for golf it should ensure that the game remains at the forefront of future developments in this field.

GI: Within the Foundation are there mechanisms for consultation with people who are working within the industry like greenkeepers?

DS: The Foundation is run by an independent Board of Trustees. We certainly plan to set up some form of consultative forum, whereby interested parties - funding bodies, industry organisations, environmental groups, etc - come together to discuss current issues, to help us develop our strategy and action programme. I see this as an advisory commission, but very important in guiding our work. It should certainly include greenkeeping representation.

We also have a Technical Working Group to discuss the nuts and bolts of the Committed to Green programme. This started under the Ecology Unit and is basically for the National Ecology Officers who are employed by their respective national golf federations. These are not strictly ecologists, some are, but others come from more agronomic backgrounds, and some are in fact ex-greenkeepers. Their role is to develop golf-environment projects in their country and this means regular contact with greenkeepers on the courses they visit. Our group meetings usually involve the greenkeeper from our host site.

GI: It doesn't sound as though there any formal arrangements for anyone from the greenkeeping profession to contribute to those meetings?

DS: That is fair comment. My feeling is that through the original pilot projects, the continual work of the National Ecology Officers and liaison with clubs already signing up to Committed to Green, we have had considerable input from the green-keeping profession. There is no way anyone can say we have ignored green-keepers, but I do accept that this has not been apparent at a formal association level and I suppose that is where the problem is perceived.

One important principle I am keen to maintain is that all formal contact between the Committed to Green Foundation and the greenkeeping profession should be via FEGGA. We are a European programme and we need to be able to communicate with greenkeepers at that level. When FEGGA delegates come to our meetings - such as the recent Valderrama Summit - they are representing all 22 national greenkeeper associations, including BIGGA. We are doing exactly the same with the golf architects.

In future, therefore, we will certainly be happy for FEGGA to participate



What is the Valderrama Declaration?

The Valderrama Declaration reads as follows:

Golf is a game rich in tradition and heritage, which owes its origins to nature. The first golf courses were formed entirely by natural elements and the game evolved to fit

what nature provided.

However, like in many other sports, the pressures of modern life have tended to move the game away from its natural origins, as courses have increasingly become concentrated near to large population centres. Moreover, the growth of the game has spread golf far beyond its original climatic region, which has led to the need to confront new challenges in the field of course design and construction, and the management of turfgrass and water resources. The television image of manicured perfection reinforces the risk of golf becoming more and more disconnected from its natural environment. This is having a fundamental effect on how the game is played and

perceived.

Golf has an enormous global following. It has the capacity to motivate and inspire. At the same time when pursued without the limitations of a guiding environmental ethic, it can impact severely on ecosystems and communities. Golf is both influenced by, and exerts an influence on, the society and the natural environment in which it takes place. By drawing on its traditions and values, golf has therefore a remarkable opportunity, and a responsibility, to play a positive role in moulding the attitudes and goals of the world in which we live and to set an example in environmental stewardship.

Over recent years the golfing bodies in the USA and Europe have achieved a greater understanding of the environmental aspects of golf course construction and management. By using science as a foundation for research and education programmes in the areas of turfgrass management, sustainable development and environmental protection it has been possible to develop initiatives and partnerships for the benefit of golf, the environment and people These actions represent long-term commitments embodied in the philosophy of a

'Green Games' ethic: a combination of environmental stewardship. economic efficiency and social responsibility, which together form the cornerstones of the international sporting community's Agenda 21. By subscribing to this ethic, and by continuing to support the principles and practices of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and Committed to Green the golf community declares its commitment to sustainability and respect for its natural heritage

Signed on behalf of the golf authorities by

F Morgan Taylor, President of the USGA Peter Dawson, Secretary of the R&A Dieter Usner, President of the EGA

Also endorsed on behalf of sport and the environmental community by

Pal Schmitt, Chairman, International Olympic Committee Sport and Environmental

Claude Martin, Director General, World Wide Fund for Nature International Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, Director Technology, Industry and Economics Division

United Nations Environment Programme
James Currie, Director General Environment, European Commission



actively in our Consultative Forum and Technical Working Group meetings. Meanwhile at a national level the Ecology Officers will continue to work with their national greenkeeper asso-ciations and that will give us another line of feedback.

GI: There is a feeling perhaps that BIGGA being the largest greenkeeping association and with UK viewed as the leading golf force in Europe that BIG-GA should be given a slightly greater

DS: BIGGA is a key member of FEGGA and has its influence through that route. I believe it is important to stick to the principle of FEGGA being our single point of contact for the entire European greenkeeping profes-

GI: From where did the initiative for Committed to Green initially come?

DS: In our early meetings with the European Commission, they mentioned the Blue Flag scheme for bathing beaches. You go to a beach, see a blue flag flying, and know it is clean and safe. They felt we could take a similar approach and develop a green flag for golf courses to prove their environmental credentials.

The Blue Flag is underpinned by the Bathing Water Directive, a simple, legal threshold for water quality. No such scheme would work for golf, so instead we took an Environmental Management System approach. You may have heard of EMAS or ISO14001, international standards for environmental management. They are primarily aimed at large enterprises and are very bureaucratic and costly. However, their basic structure and principles can readily be adapted to smaller situations. So, in effect we have shadowed EMAS, stripped it down to reflect the scale and nature of golf courses and branded it Committed to Green. In this way we have a product which addresses golf in a relevant and practical way, yet is based around the structure of an internationally recognised management system.

Our biggest problem in golf was the perception from the outside world that the game was anti-environment. Although we have made good progress in putting forward a more positive case, there are still plenty of people who think golf courses are bad for the environment. Committed to Green is therefore a tool for helping golf clubs to show that they are being responsibly managed and to gain public recognition for their environmental achievements. It is not a question of interfering with how courses are managed. It is a voluntary programme and it is up to participating clubs to progress according to their wishes and circumstances. We want to help them gain full recognition but there is no

compulsion.

I know many greenkeepers say that they are doing much of this already. That's true, but largely this is being done individually in an unstructured way. If we could bring all this together under the Committed to Green label "from all across Europe" imagine the positive effect of hundreds, even thousands, of golf clubs taking an environmental lead. It would be a huge statement by the golf communi-ty which would be immensely beneficial for the game as a whole.

GI: Do you think the public perception of golf is still negative or has this changed over the last five years?

DS: It has improved but there is still a long way to go. Attitudes in the UK have always been less hostile than on the continent but we must never be complacent. To establish and maintain a positive public perception of golf is a long-term, continual task. There is still a lot of work to be done.

GI: On a practical level, on the implementation of the programme, who are you highlighting to carry out the programme for you at individual golf clubs?

DS: Committed to Green is about teamwork. I have often seen greenkeepers doing great conservation work on their course but without any support or involvement from others.

In most cases the greenkeeper will be the pivotal person in devising and implementing the programme. I certainly cannot imagine a club achieving full Committed to Green recognition without the active participation of the greenkeeper, but nor will any club achieve recognition solely on the greenkeepers' efforts. It has to involve members, other staff and perhaps even local specialists.

The starting point of Committed to Green is for a club to adopt an environmental policy statement and to create a Committed to Green Team. That will ensure broader support and legitimacy for the project. Remember, the programme is not just about conservation on the golf course. It embraces a wide range of technical aspects - obvious course related matters such as nature conservation, turf and water management, as well as

broader topics such as energy effi-ciency, waste management, purchasing policies and communications. These topics can relate to the club as a whole (buildings and dealings with the local community), so there has to be input from other people in the club.

GI: Do you find your enquiries come from greenkeepers who already have environmental policies of their own in

DS: I quite accept that in many cases the initiative will come from greenkeepers but not exclusively so. Remember we are promoting Committed to Green across Europe and the situation varies from country to country. Sometimes the initial contact comes from a member, Chair of Green or Club Secretary, in other cases the National Ecology Officer may make a presentation to a club meeting. Whether or not the greenkeeper makes the first move, he or she is soon closely involved.

GI: I am not saying it should be greenkeeper-led but that the implication is that they can do the physical work but the thinking should be left to other people. That is perhaps why there is an element of antipathy towards the programme?

DS: I do not see Committed to Green as necessarily being greenkeeper-led. The whole concept is to involve the club as a whole - that is the only way to achieve lasting improvements. Across the different management categories I expect the bulk of the practical implementation will fall to the green staff - hence their pivotal role - but the planning and presentation of the programme should involve the whole of the Committed to Green Team. To my mind that is a way forward for greenkeepers to have their work better appreciated and understood. I have not sensed any antipathy among the greenkeepers I have met but certainly we need to listen to any concerns from the profession generally.

GI: What has been the response since you were launched? How many clubs have registered within the UK?

DS: It is still early days but I think there has been a good reaction from the golf community. As the former Ecology Unit, we have not strenuously promoted Committed to Green, preferring to leave this to the National Ecology Officers, who can then provide good back up. That means the main response so far has been on the

Continent. In countries like England and Wales, where there is not yet an Ecology Officer, interested clubs have been contacting direct to my office, or via Bob Taylor at the STRI.

GI: How does the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Charter fit into Committed to Green?

DS: Committed to Green is a flexible structure, able to accommodate different national approaches. We have a common entry point (i.e. registration) and everyone eventually works towards a common goal (i.e. full recognition at European level). How they get there will depend greatly on the focus and support provided at national level. In this respect the Scottish Charter fits perfectly into the

GI: In effect the Scottish Charter would be seen as an "O" level as opposed to the "A" level that is final Committed to Green status?

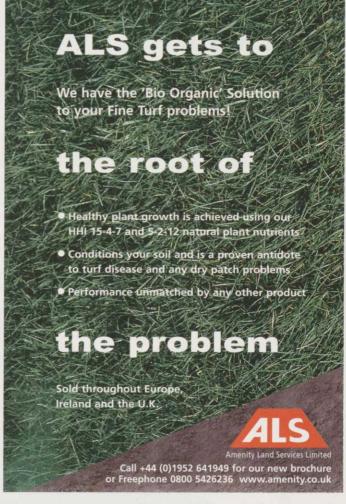
DS: The Charter is an important, integral part of the Scottish programme and confers valuable status on those who have been awarded it. The focus is more particularly on wildlife and natural heritage aspects whereas the full Committed to Green programme is meant to be a fully integrated plan including aspects like communication, education waste management and energy efficiency. In this way the Charter is an essential intermediate step in the procession along the Committed to Green path for Scottish clubs that choose to go this route.

GI: There is a concern it is the elite end of the market and that it is the big name golf clubs that have been signed up for it. Is the programme elit-

DS: I'd reject that totally. The whole aim is to ensure that it is suitable to any club, any time, anywhere.

GI: The clubs you do hear about are Valderrama, Loch Lomond and The Belfry.

DS: We have over 20 clubs in Belgium, the same again in Austria and a whole pile in Finland all setting about their environmental programme. I bet you won't have heard of most of them! Here in England we have clubs like Temple (which everyone has heard about I guess) as well as Blundell's Hill, the Phoenix Club near Rotherham, Burnham Beeches, Merrist





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Wood and many more. So, no way is there a preponderance of big name clubs. In Scotland, clubs like Linlithgow and Kilmacolm are very much at the forefront of the initiative.

On the other hand, it is important to have the tournament venues like Valderrama and The Belfry involved. They are in the public eye and they set examples to the rest of the golfing world. Indeed they should arguably be leading the way in environmental management, but you are right that we do not want any small clubs to be put off.

GI: What is the cost of getting enrolled?

DS: There is no enrolment charge. The real cost is mental strain in terms of getting people, the Committed to Green Team, to think about environmental matters. Any real expenditure should be for things they would have done anyway to improve the course, not simply to get a green award. I just hope that by thinking green, people will find better solutions to management problems; ones which enhance the golf playing experience, improve the environmental quality of the course and make for more efficient management.

GI: The other comment you hear is that it is held up by some organisations and individuals as a good cause and is purely in existence for reasons of political correctness.

DS: I don't think the golf authorities would have spent all this time and energy in developing Committed to Green if it was purely a PR exercise. I really don't understand such sentiments. If people truly care about golf and want to see the game continue to develop, they must recognise that environmental concerns have to be addressed in a proper, professional way.

We are also getting significant recognition from respected environmental groups and individuals: such as WWF and Jonathon Porritt. They are not going to stand by and let golf get away with lip service, so we have to deliver.

GI: When do you think there will be a flow of clubs coming through and completing the programme?

DS: We are still working on the final recognition criteria but I hope that we can get an initial batch of fully certified clubs within the next year or so. It does take time. Bearing in mind your previous question, it would be disastrous if we rushed things through just to claim some numbers, without having everything in place. Credibility is the key: we need accepted Environmental

Performance Indicators, we need a pool of experts around Europe to help with verification, so nobody can turn round and say it is some kind of internal fix.

GI: So when do you think you'll be going around making presentations to clubs which have completed the programme?

DS: It would be nice to peg the presentations to some major event, so we get to all the golf media. We launched Committed to Green at the 1997 Ryder Cup, so maybe next year's matches at The Belfry would be a good target.

GI: What was the purpose of the Valderrama Summit?

DS: This needs explaining because I think there has been a few misunderstandings about the Summit.

The Valderrama Summit was primarily a joint meeting between the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Committee and National Ecology Officers and researchers from Europe. It was to review research findings from the last decade and to discuss mechanisms for their practical application.

We then found we had the opportunity to invite top officials from the golf authorities and leading environmental organisations. In the end we had the Director Generals of the World Wide Fund for Nature International and the European Commission Environment Directorate, on the same platform as the Presidents of the USGA and EGA and the Secretary of the R&A. This does not happen every day and was a unique chance to get them to agree a joint statement on common principles and goals relating to golf and the environment - hence the Valderrama Declaration.

Given how only a few years ago WWF was so sceptical about golf, I feel this was a fantastic achievement and an exciting development. It is one which the golf industry as a whole should be supporting.

GI: The fact that it was initially a USGA committee meeting perhaps answers the comment about there being an American bias.

DS: There was no American bias. Those comments in last month's Greenkeeper International were ridiculous - they were inaccurate and offensive. The Summit had a well balanced programme focusing on issues, not a comparison between countries. Technical research has been predominantly American - that is a fact - so there was more emphasis on American

research but when it came to practical matters like nature conservation and Committed to Green, then there was ample input from European participants.

GI: Although there was an under representation of European greenkeeping?

DS: There were two FEGGA delegates there out of a total of about 35 Europeans. Indeed we had bent over backwards to make sure the green-keepers were represented, so I am disappointed to hear such comments.

GI: How do you greet the news that member Associations of FEGGA have agreed that the programme can't be supported?

DS: I was very surprised and I certainly had no inkling of it. What we had asked for was an endorsement of the Valderrama Declaration; something we are putting to other golf organisations such as the PGAs and golf architects. Indeed we have received a very warm letter of support from the GCSAA.

The Valderrama Declaration is about traditional values of golf and good environmental practice. There is nothing here which can conceivably be antagonistic to greenkeepers. The invitation is still open to FEGGA to come on board, support Committed to Green and to work with us. I accept we can improve the communications there but it is a two way flow.

GI: What are your views on BIGGA's own Golf Environment Competition?

DS: I think it is a great initiative. At first I was concerned that the competition format creates a winner, while the efforts of all the others is unrewarded, which could be discouraging. However, the competition has progressed over the years and it is now a widely known entity. Indeed it could be an excellent feeder into Committed to Green. That would be a great opportunity for BIGGA to help our programme. All those entrants who do not gain an award could still be encouraged to take their environmental work forward through Committed to Green.

GI: Any other comments you'd like to make?

DS: Just to say I think we are all working towards common goals, and despite recent difficulties, I very much hope that the greenkeeping profession will get behind Committed to Green, so we can work together.



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Welcome to this month's news. Firstly I must apologise for the lateness of these notes and events, due to mis-scheduling. These items failed to materialise in the latter part of

The Autumn outing at Windyhill GC on 22 September was played on schedule. The day's weather started in an ominous fashion. However, by the time we teed off, the clouds gave way to broken spells of sunshine, although the wind was a touch breezy! A low turnout on the day with only forty three entries returned. Nevertheless some good golf, and some erratic golf, was played. Trust me on this. So here are

the results of the day's play.
Scratch prize G. Bruen, East
Kilbride 74-3 (71). First Class. First. L. Miller, Cowal GC, 80-9 (71). Second: B. Duncan, Drumpelier GC, 80-6 (74). Third: D. Gall, Cardross GC 84-9 (75). Second Class First. J. Brown, Bearsden GC, 78-11 (67) Second: T. Hindmarch, Erskine GC, 81-12 (69) Third: G. Semple, East Kilbride GC, 86-14 (72). Third Class, First: B. Brown, Douglas Park GC 94-25 (69) Second A. Donaghy, Erskine GC 91-20 (71) Third S. Murray, Douglas Park GC, 96-21

(75) Trade Prize: B. Ingles, Greentech, 76-2 (74). Visitors prize: S. Harriet, Bearsden, GC 96-13 (83). The prize for nearest the pin went to L. Miller, Cowal GC. Longest drive went to S Harriet, Bearsden GC.

A big thank you to the Captain and members of Windyhill GC for allowing us to use their course and facilities. Thanks also to Head Greenkeeper Mark McBride and his staff for having the course in great shape on the day, considering the rainfall that week and finally thanks to the Clubmaster, Andy Falkner, and his staff for all their efforts. A personal thank you also to Joe Bell for volunteering to sell raffle tickets. Your help is much appreciated. Fancy a job on the Committee?

On now to the second draw of the 100 Club and the lucky winner was none other than Jim Smith. Well

done to you Jim.

Five-a-sides at Scotstoun, Sunday 3 October turned out to be a big disappointment for the organiser Stuart Taylor.

Only 12 teams entered for the tournament. Two teams gave a few days' notice of cancellation and on the day two more teams cancelled at the last minute. After the preliminary rounds the qualifiers were Crow Wood v East Kilbride/Pollock and Rigby Taylor/ Killermont v Souters. Into the final went Rigby Taylor/Killermont v Crow Wood, with Rigby Taylor/Killermont winning by 1-0.

I have been asked by Stuart to thank Martin Carey, from Balmore GC, for arranging his team so well and also to apologise to Windyhill GC for the decision taken on the day of awarding the points in the fashion that he did.

As mentioned previously Stuart Taylor was very disappointed and disillusioned with the poor turnout. It takes a lot of time and effort to organise these events for your benefit! Additionally a considerable amount of Section funds have been needlessly wasted booking extra pitches and referees that weren't required on the day. In future, please have some consideration for the organiser of any such event and give them sufficient notice of your inten-

Nairn Brown, with John Deere's machinery demonstration roadshow, at Haggs Castle GC 7 October. A good turn out, at least a hundred bodies turned out representing councils and golf courses alike. A great opportunity to see the machines in action and a chance to have your backside on the seat and try out the latest equipment for yourself.

It is time to say farewell to Robert Hogarth who, by the time you are reading this, will have taken up his new post at the new McKenzie Hotel complex. We wish you all the best in your new post, Robert, and hope everything goes well for you.

Best wishes and every success to Tom Hindmarsh on his appointment

at Cathcart Castle GC

Stuart Taylor will be trying to arrange an 11-a-side match against the Central and Northern Section some time in February. Anybody interested should contact Stuart Taylor. Once again, please send me any information you have regarding anything! Well, just about anything. 0141-776-1532 M:07050-173080

Gavin Jarvis

As I write this on my computer in early January, I am wondering what all the fuss about Y2K was all about, or was it just that we were all so well prepared. That makes a change! Anyhow, my computer did not crash so here comes another boring old North Section report.

I attended the Scottish Region Patron's lunch in Stirling during December along with my Vice-Chairman Wilson Morrison and our two Patrons' Award winners John Geddes and Gordon Moir. We had an excellent meal in the company of our friends from the trade and once again RA, Peter Boyd, provided us with a great after meal speaker. All the Section winners were in attendance, which is very good and a great time was had by all. A huge vote of thanks must go to Peter for his efforts.

The Highland Golf Development Group ran an environmental seminar day at Nairn recently in conjunction with the Scottish Wildlife Trust. It was good to see many Section members present for what was a very informative day, with a range of speakers covering all the areas. Two members, Alan Dobbie, Boat of Garten, and Stuart Hogg, Fortrose, gave talks on their plans and how they are implementing them.

Both were excellent and could be used by BIGGA in future for seminars. After lunch Nairn head man, Ian Carson, took us out onto his lovely course to look around and discuss with Jonathan Smith of Scottish Wildlife Trust, areas that could be changed for the benefit of golfers and wildlife alike.

The day was excellent and credit must go to the HGD and its Officers, Neil Hampton who, incidentally, is the son of Section member George Hampton, Pitlochry. Their next seminar is this month at Tain and is called Golf Course Management - Facts not Fiction. I have been invited to speak to committee members and officials of clubs in the Highlands to try and give them an insight into the ways a greenkeeper looks after a golf course and how the officials and greenkeeper can work together to achieve, what, after all, should be a common goal.

I will present two papers in the morning and take delegates for a course and shed visit in the afternoon. Hopefully, as a result of this day, club officials will respect their greenkeeper better and officials from smaller clubs with no full time staff will learn a little about the job and

what it entails.

Finally, in December's report, you may have seen me welcome Peter Culter to the Section. I checked my report and can honestly say that the mistake was not of my making!

Iain Macleod

Central

Here's the news you have all been waiting for! The number of the first winning ticket in the Club 2000 draw is No. 00247 and the lucky ticket holder is A. Brown, from Auchterarder. A cheque for £50 is already in the post. The winner of the February draw will be in next month's magazine.

On the new members front we welcome Sharon Laurie, from Elie Golf Club, and Willie 'Whitty' Whitfield, from STS, who are both rejoining the Section and also William Bell, from Tulliallan Golf Club, I bet he doesn't see much of his boss this year, Duncan Wright, Paul Brown and Stuart Muir, all from Elmwood Golf Course. They all put on their forms that they play golf, so surely the numbers at the golf tournaments will increase this year!

Congratulations go to Section member Elliott Small on his appointment as BIGGA Chairman and to John Philp from Carnoustie on his recent award in the New Year's Honour List. Well done to you both.

The entry forms for the Spring Tournament at St Andrews In April will be with you shortly, as this is also the second qualifying event for the National Tournament. If you want to be one of the lucky ones to participate in this prestigious tournament, PLEASE return your entry form, along with the entry fee, as soon as possible, as places are at a premium. I know I keep harping on about this but some of you do leave it to the last minute, which totally up the perfect organisation of the event. You can put your own letters in the blanks.

At the last committee meeting, various ideas were put forward as to how we can get more of you to participate in some of our events. A form regarding this will be sent to you and can I ask you to take the time to put your thoughts/ideas down, keeping them clean, as it is your section which the committee are running on your behalf and for your benefit.

John Crawford

Ayrshire

The Patrons' Christmas lunch was held on December 8 at the Terraces Hotel, Stirling. It was, as usual, expertly organised by our Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd. The entertainment was provided by after dinner speaker, Ian McPherson, from East Kilbride, who kept the company well amused. The main event was the pre-sentation of the Patrons' Award with our two winners, Roland Blackburn, of Southerness, and Scott McLean, of West Kilbride, on hand to collect their awards, including a trip to Harrogate 2000. Congratulations to Roland and Scott as well as all the other Section winners.

The Ayrshire Section wish to echo the sentiments of the Scottish Region by extending a big thank you to the Patrons for their continued support.

News has reached me that Wallace Mercer of Skermolie Golf Club has recently won best student at South Ayrshire College when completing his SVQ Level 3. Congratulations to Wallace for this fine achievement.

It is with regret that I have to report the sad news of the recent death of Harry Diamond after a long illness. Harry was a very distinguished character, well liked by all who knew him. He was a very prominent greenkeeper and was always very active within our Association, even after his retirement. On behalf of the Ayrshire Section I would like to extend my sincere condolences to Harry's family.

That's it. See you next month with news on Harrogate and anything else I hear. Any news please call on 01505 683278

Iain Barr

Well I hope everyone had a good start to the new Millennium and you are looking forward to the year ahead. The start of the new season is only a matter of a few weeks away so hopefully it will be a good start one. The Section held its annual dance at the start of December and a great night was had by everyone who was there. Hopefully we can get a few more along this year as numbers have dropped over the last couple of years. The Grand Draw was drawn at the dance and the top prizes were won by 1. TV/Video, name unknown, but it was a friend of Peter Ormiston, Uphall Golf Club. 2. CD Mini hi-fi, Richard Mullen, Swanston Golf Club. Various prizes were won by various other people, names can be obtained from Craig Pennycuick, Social Convener. A decision will be made soon if this is to continue this year. Watch this space.

If you have any ideas about the dance/grand raffle, or anything else



going on in the Section, drop me a line or give me a call on the usual numbers. Come on, let's hear from you because it's your section.

People on the move this month are yours truly. I am on the move to take up the position of Head Greenkeeper at West Linton Golf Club in January and I am looking forward to this as it will present a marvellous challenge and I look forward to working with the club who have a very progressive attitude and a large membership.

What makes it more exciting is working at a club that has former Masters and British Open Champion Sandy Lyle as a member. Having been at Swanston GC for nearly nine years, I must say I have had a great time over the years and have made a lot of friends in the Club. I would like to thank the Captain, Secretary, committee and all the staff and members for making it a very enjoyable time. I would like to wish the club all the best for the future and may it go from strength to strength. I will be back regularly for a game, so hopefully I'll see you all then.

At West Linton I am taking over from Donald Fraser who is retiring after 30 years with the club, so I, the club, members and staff wish Donald all the best in his retirement.

Moving back to Swanston, Richard Mullen, who was my deputy, has been promoted to Head Greenkeeper and Frank Forrest who was assistant greenkeeper, has been promoted to Deputy Head Greenkeeper. All the best to both of them in their new positions at Swanston and if either of them need any advice, don't forget my phone will always be switched off. All the best from the Section to both of them.

Committee member, Stuart Townsend and his wife Alison, have just had a baby, Rebecca. Both mum and baby are doing well. Congratulations to both of them from everyone in the East section. If anyone else knows of any births, etc., or any other information, let me know.

On a sad note, one of our past Scottish Chairman Harry Diamond, from the Ayrshire Section, passed away in early December, after an illness. Harry, who was Head Greenkeeper at Ayr Bellisle for many years will be sadly missed in the Scottish Region as he was one of the true characters of the region. Our thoughts go out to his family.

Well, that's it all for this month. Next month we will have a report on BTME 2000 and any other news from around the Section. As I am moving I will have new phone numbers and address which will be published in next months magazine for anyone who has any stories etc, to get in touch.

See you all next month. Chris Yeaman.



Sheffield

Firstly, on behalf of the Section our sincere thanks to Martyn Jones,

Senior Lecturer at Myerscough College for giving us a first class talk on microbiology. Martyn's reputation precedes him as a lecturer who is able to make even the driest subjects interesting and this was vindicated on the day. Our next lecture on the 4th of March at Rotherham Golf Club is by Mr. Simon Barnaby, of the Scotts Company, and I'm sure his talk will

also be of the highest standard.

Our AGM was held on the same day and some developments transpired. Firstly, both Jeremy Duffield and John Lax resigned from their respective posts on the committee. The Section would like to thank Jeremy and John for all their endeavours over the last few years and naturally we wish them well for the future.

Ken Arnold also relinquished his position as President. Ken held this post for over 30 years and during that time has seen the Section rise from small beginnings to one of the most successful in the country. He is an Ex Councilor and Lord Mayor of Sheffield and at over eighty years old still retains an enthusiasm for Greenkeeping which can only be described as amazing. On the day of his resignation he was presented with a suitable commemorative award and was installed as immediate Past

President, bestowed as a life member and co-opted back on to the committee, which clearly illustrates how valuable he has been and continues to be to our Section. All at Sheffield would like to thank him for his council over his many years as President and wish him and his family all the best for the future.

Out with the old and in with the new as they say! Congratulations to Barry Heaney, Past Chairman of our association on his appointment as President of our Section. Barry has been the hub of the Section for many years and in being appointed as President will ensure he remains integral to the continued development of our requirements.

Congratulations also to Alan Samson on his appointment as committee member.

Alan, who works at Wortley Golf Club, is seen as an enthusiastic and active individual who will no doubt benefit our Section.

We would also like to welcome some new members to our Section. They are: Andrew Fenn, Alferton GC; Adam Kendall, Brough GC. Andrew Billings, Brough GC; David Creaser, Brough GC, and Darren Thomas, Rother Valley GC.

Finally, two dates to put in your diary. The President's Day tournament will be held at Wheatley Golf Club on Tuesday May 9th tee off at 1.30pm and the Annual Tournament is at Matlock Golf Club on Monday 10th July tee off at 1.30pm.

John Coleman

Northern

I would like to start off as your new Secretary by thanking Simon Heppenstall for his time and dedication to this position over the years. Enjoy your retirement with your new family.

The Winter Golf Tournament took place at Fulford GC. This was sponsored by The Greenkeeping Supply Company, which was represented by Liam Galway. Many thanks for this valuable sponsorship and all the other companies who sponsored our golf days during last year.

Back to the golf and despite the bad weather leading up to the event, this had no effect on the course, everybody had a good time despite the wind and rain. Thanks go to the head greenkeeper Mark Mennal and his staff for the good condition of the course, the caterers for the meal and Fulford GC for the courtesy of the course. Teams of four were the order of the day with a few teams of three people not turning up for whatever reason. Results: 1. Robin Smith, Richard Harris, Telford Jarvis, Steve Dale; 2. Roy Spencer, Marcus Cordingley, Norman Schofield. 3. Les Kirkbright, Richard Pull, Mark Mennal.

One of the teams with three counted all three scores instead of the best two, Dennis is already sharpening his handicapping pencil for you, be warned!

The 1999 AGM followed with 31 members present. The main issue to come out is an increase to the golf entry fees. It was decided to have an increase to £17.50 with two courses, still good value for the day. Committee members are as follows: President- Liam Galway, Chairman-Simon Heppenstall. Vice Chairman-John Waite, Secretary/Treasurer - Andy Smith; Committee- Dennis Cockburn, Gary Potter, Richard Smith, Jim Brown.

The committee would like to thank David Thackery, Telford Jarvis, Richard Gamble, Phil Mitchell, and also the outgoing President, Mel Guy, for their work and time during their years of service. Liam has a hard act to follow.

The annual Dinner Dance on Saturday 11th March will again be held at Bradford G.C. after last years success. Tickets are on sale from committee members.

There is no other news at the moment and future events will be published at a further date. If any one has any news around the section that I could print would you please let me know at the following address: 67 Asquith Avenue, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9QS or telephone on 0113 2383188

Andy Smith

Cleveland

Congratulations to Anthony (Titch) McGeough. On New Year's Eve he got engaged to the beautiful Pippa. Titch is First Assistant at Richmond Golf Club. Good luck and

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Around the green

best wishes go to both of them.

Oliver Shepard, also of Richmond Golf Club, did not get engaged. In fact he's still looking for a partner. If anyone knows of a suitable girl, contact Richmond Golf Club.

Congratulations also to Kevin Scarce, of Bedale Golf club. He reached the National Final of the Toro Student of the Year Award. Unfortunately he did not win, but to get to the final is still a great achieve-

ment. Well done.

It's been a long time coming, but the Greenkeepers beat the Groundsmen in the Annual Turf Care Quiz at Mount Oswald Golf Club. It was a close battle with only a couple of points for the winning margin. Unfortunately those who attended the quiz probably can't remember much about this historic victory and it might be a long time until we win again. Many thanks to Terry Charlton and Turf Care for organising the event and providing drinks and the supper. Any news contact me on 07808 196558.

Steven Jaques

North Wales

A meeting was held on January 4 and it was decided that at all our future golf events the prize and trophy structure will be: Greenkeeper members can win trophies and prizes; guests (golf related only) can win prizes and, as an appreciation of the trade, trade members will now have trophies to play for at each of our events donated by the Section. I hope this will be to everyone's satisfaction. Entrance fees will also be pegged to the same cost as last year and a review taken to see how much it has eaten into our funds at the end of the year. The annual North Wales - North West match will take place at Hazel Grove GC around the 20 April. Please contact Gary Edwards. Gary is also in discussion with Peter Lacey of the South Wales Section about a match around June - July to be held at a mid Wales venue. Again, any interest, get in touch.

Remember our spring tournament and regional qualifier is on April 5 at Frodsham Golf Course.

The annual College Seminar is on Wednesday 23 February. Confirmed speakers are Bob Taylor, Conservation; David Stansfield, The Role of the Agronomist, and my own Chairman of Greens, Jim Wren.

A full itinerary will be sent to all clubs. Please try to get chairmen, secretaries, captains etc, interested. There's a lot happening out there and golf clubs need to know. The event will be chaired by Mike Cole, President of the WGU.

On March 22 we have a lecture

On March 22 we have a lecture again at the college on the rules of golf and the greenkeeper and noise levels. Please come along, free to members, £1 to guests. Starts 2.30 - 4.30 pm.

Finally, welcome to one new member David Michael Gavin of Holywell GC. Hope to see you at our events some time.

That's all folks, See ya, Dave Goodridge



East Midlands

This year's Christmas Tournament was held at Glen Gorse GC on Thursday December 9. The day was fine and dry, but with a very strong cold wind making conditions very difficult. The format for the day being a Singles Stb 3/4 H/Cap. However, some very respectable scores were returned.

The winners were as follows: Category 1, 1. Jeff Dickinson, Leen Valley, 30 pts; 2. Adi Porter, Greetham Valley, 28 pts; 3. Richard Barker, Kirby Muxloe, 28 pts. Category 2. 1. Gavin Robson, Lingdale, 27pts.; 2. Mark Bindley, Kirby Muxloe, 27pts; 3. Jamie Bedford, Birstall, 25 pts. Trade & Associate. Pete Fell, Aitkens, 30 pts. I would like to thank Glen Gorse

I would like to thank Glen Gorse GC for extending courtesy of their excellent course and also to our sponsor Rigby Taylor for providing the prizes. Also I would like to thank Frank Kempster, Head Greenkeeper and his staff for a very well presented course, not forgetting the Steward & Stewardess for a fantastic Christmas meal. Next year's Tournament will be held at Oakmere

Park GC, on Thursday, December 7

I would also like to thank all those who kindly took their time to fill in the recent questionnaire. The results of which will appear in next month's article.

Finally, I have now got my own email address, so if any member should need to contact me via Email, the address is as follows. Antony-Bindley@beeb.net

Antony Bindley



Essex

Easy, I thought, take over the job as scribe for the Essex Section, jot down the winners' names, include a few thank you's for the trade and that's that. But, as the pile of crumpled paper containing failed efforts begin to overflow out of the bin, it dawned on me just how much we all take the work done by the committee for granted. When members step down they are very hard to replace, especially when they are as professional as David Wells who stands down as scribe and as enthusiastic as committee member Steve Cox. They will both be missed, but hopefully myself, Steve Crosdale and Andy Sheehan will able to fill their shoes.

Firstly allow me to welcome new Section members Robert Cox, South Essex G&GC and Michael Walsh, from Burnham on Crouch. I hope to see you both at future events.

My first golf day report comes from Rochford Hundred GC which, despite freezing conditions, was on all main greens and very well presented, thanks to Head Greenkeeper David Wells, Deputy, David Rand, and all the green staff at Rochford GC who braved the conditions early in the morning to make the course playable. These thanks are extended to the catering department who laid on a fantastic carvery enjoyed by all. The winner on count back from two others was Dave Wells who scored 34 points just beating Mark Stopps and M.Allen respectively. Nearest the

Pin went to H. Wilson and Longest Drive to S. Tovey, Orsett GC. Thanks to Greenkeeping Supply Company for supplying the prizes. The trade prize went to H. Wilson, from Greenkeeping Supply Company, with 28 pts.

Main sponsors for the day were Ernest Doe & Sons who along with Sherriff Crop Care, CMW, Rigby Taylor, Gem Professional, Grass Roots, Driving Force Leisure, Grasshopper, Greenkeeping Supply Company and Bishop Brothers ensured that every golfer taking part received a prize of some description. Thanks one and all.

Golfer of the Year went to Chris Ward, of Abridge Golf Club, who won the Burnham On Crouch and Thorndon Park golf days. Well done

Following the golf the AGM was held and the committee installed. They are:-Chairman: Carl Croucher, Orsett GC; Treasurer: John Selwood, Abridge GC; Secretary: Martin Forrester, Stapleford Abbotts GC; Education Officer: John Sinclair, Thorpe Hall GC; Competition/Handicap Secretary: Dominic Rogers, Orsett GC, Scribe: Steve Crosdale, Great Hadham G&CC, Andy Sheehan, Bentley GC also joined as committee member.

If you want to know what else happens at the AGM and where your money goes, come to the next one, or give the relevant committee member a call, numbers are in the BIGGA Directory.

The fixture card for 2000 should be with you by the end of February, if yours isn't contact Martin Forrester, 01245 603131. Martin also tells me that the Gentleman's Dinner at Walton Heath this year is to be held on March 10. Invitations will be sent to members who have supported the golf days throughout 1999.

Two more dates for your diary, this time from Mr Sinclair: Thursday 3rd February, although this may have passed before you receive the magazine and Thursday March 23, both dates are booked for lectures at Writtle College. Details of lecture topics will follow shortly.

That about wraps up my first report, and without a mention of a



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certain mid-table London football team. Please let me have your views on what you consider my articles should contain, without your input they will end up as just a list of names and dates. I am confident that between us we can manage more than this. My number is 01376 551350, give me a call.

Steve Crosdale

East Anglia

Another year older, deeper in debt, such is life. One word describes our day at Bungay Way back in December and that's luvly. Luvly Day,

Luvly grub, Luvly course and Luvly people, what more can you want? Sixty Nine turned up, what a number all raring to go before it rained. It was, of course, the Annual Turkey Scramble sponsored by CMW. Results. 1. The Barnham Broom Trio of Lemon, Elliot and Brown, 58.4; 2. The Caldecot team of Davidson, Bun and Holiday, 58.9. 3. Three Nomads, Bird, Nash and Bartram, 59. All pretty tight. Longest Drive, Mat Gill. Nearest the pin Alan Elliot. The loo seat was nearly won by Sam for going into the wrong loo. His Handlebars' gave him away. The loo seat was actually won by Mike Taylor, of Tomlinson, but I don't know why.

All prizes were presented by Miles James. I think that's the right way around, Bungay Captain. A special thanks to Mike And James for presenting the course in fine nick.

There was a warm welcome for the new Head Greenkeeper at Purdis Heath, Norman Fredrick. I am sure he will build on the foundations laid by his much respected predecessor Steve Nove.

One comes, one goes, our adopted cousin from over the pond Greg McHugh, Pulh, Barney McGrew, Cuthbert Dibble and Grub is off to some horrible place - Hawaii. He'll miss the frost and the fog. I'm told the grass over there grows on the women. Hope he's got some shears. Seriously, we all wish him the very best, he's a smashing bloke and will be missed.

More prizes than a Miss World contest, well nearly, were presented by Ernie Halt to Nick Brewster, Spring; Steve Davidson, Summer; Greg Hash, Autumn and Steve Curtis Winter. Finally, the President's Prize was presented to our Secretary, Ian Willitt, for the tremendous work he puts in to keep our Section at the top. We have it on good authority that we are the largest, the best organised and the best behaved of the lot and that has much to do with Ian's leadership. Cheers mate.

Then came the AGM, if you blinked you would have missed it -25 minutes start to finish. Enough said, no waffle. All offices elected en block with Paul Gould taking over from Greg McHugh (Pugh, Barney, no, I won't do that Alan).

A few dates for 2000 Haverhill April

27. Rushmere June 9 Norfolk v Essex. Stoke by Nayland July. Royal Cromer 15 August 15. Walderingfield October. Thorpeness, December 19 AGM. Also a seminar at Thorpeness on November 14.

Let's not forget the trade lads who look after us so well throughout the year. I'll try to remember all, as I forgot to pick up the list. Here goes:-CMW, Sisis, Rushbrook, Rhone Poulenc, Colliers, Rigby Taylor, Consultant Clarkson, Toro, Bartams, Ben Burgess, Wilmot Pertwee, Greenkeeper Supply Co, Pattersons, Hayter and anyone else who knows me.

And finally as another round of pay talks have come to an end, does anyone think that some clubs assume that there is an honour attached to working for them which negates the need for payment?

Mick Lathrope

Sussex

Firstly, I would like to wish Happy New Year to all the members and hope that everybody had a great Christmas.

Our Turkey Trot was once again held at Littlehampton. I would like to thank David Wood and all his staff. The course was, as usual, in exceptional condition considering it was the middle of December. I would also like to thank the kitchen staff, bar staff and the Secretary for their hospitality this year and every year.

Now the results of the Texas

Scramble; This was played in teams of four with a few 3 balls, each player having to use three drives and all the scores counting on two of the holes.

Results: 1. (On count back) 58 pts. Chris Allen, John Luckhurst, bandit, Peter Bearmore. 2. 58 pts. John Hill, David Haskell, Nick Beadle, Peter Hammond. 3rd with 57 pts. Mark Day, Billy Martin, Richard Vetich.

The team with the longest wack was Tony Bremer, Mike Ring, John Davidson and their influential captain Brian Willmott! Nearest the pin prizes were won by Ian Semple, Andy Cloud, Stefan Antolik, David Ansell, Chris Allen, Richard Vetich and Mike Ring.

Thanks to everyone who attended and thanks to George Barr for the

organisation.

Also it was great to see a good turnout by the Sussex Section for the James Beard Seminar on January 6 at Wentworth. Everyone who attended will agree it was a very worthwhile exercise and thanks to Scotts for putting on a great day at a great venue.

a great vertue.

Now some dates for your diary in 2000. May 4, Spring Tournament at Royal Eastbourne GC. July 20 Summer Tournament at Copthorne GC and some time in the summer there will be a special Club Team Challenge Fourball event at Cooden Beach Golf Club. eg. Head Greenkeeper, Club Captain, Green Chairman, Stewards.

