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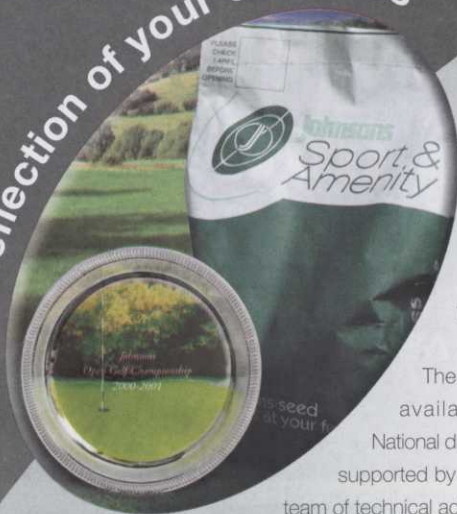
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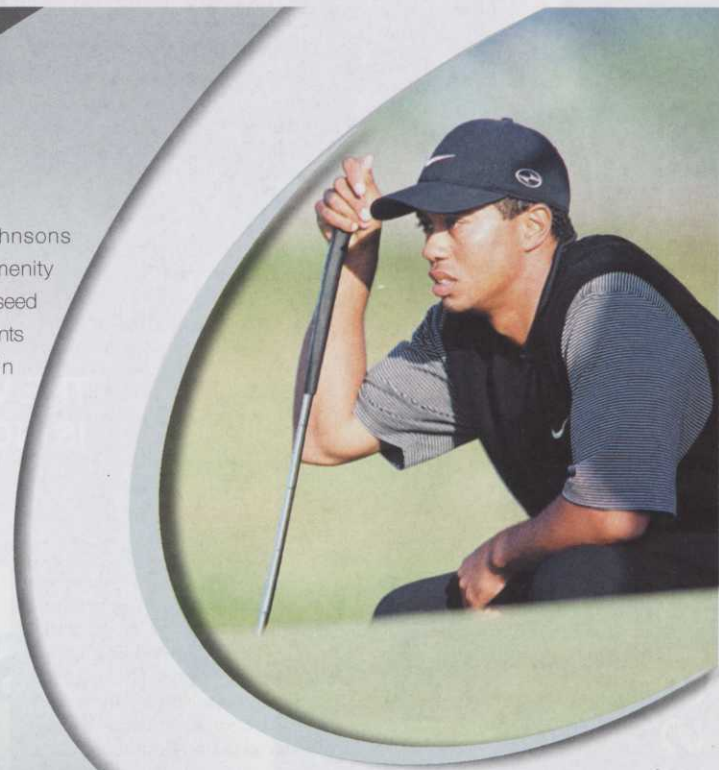
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BIGGA
ESSAY
COMPETITION

Simon O'Hara, Assistant at Fota Island Golf Club, Cork, Ireland, was the winner of the Under 25 category of the BIGGA Essay Competition... for the second year in a row! The Irish literary tradition lives on.

Managing without Chemicals

We are fortunate to be living in a time of considerable scientific and ecological enlightenment, for in such an era surely we will prove that turf grasses can be successfully maintained without resorting to synthetic chemicals. It is becoming abundantly clear that legislation will increasingly limit the use of chemicals so we must therefore concentrate our energies on finding alternative solutions.

The prospect of managing a turf grass environment without utilising chemicals may one day be tenable. The advances being made in researching maintenance practises, developing resistant grass cultivars and exploring biological alternatives to synthetic chemicals may soon enable us to adopt chemical free maintenance practises.

The task of managing golf courses without resorting to chemical solutions is a path that many of today's most progressive managers are beginning to tread. There are a number of sound reasons for this strategy, principally the European Union's increasing restrictions on pesticide usage, growing environmental awareness, inherent risks to personal health along with the financial costs combine to instil on us the need to seek alternatives where ever possible.

Through the examination of the most prevalent problems to affect our turf grass environment we may be able to explore non-chemical alternatives. The most frequent attacks, normally dealt with by chemicals, that are ravaged on turf grasses include worm casting along with invasion by animals, pests, weeds and pathogens. These common concerns may yet be controlled by non-chemical means. While many potential solutions may be too expensive or time consuming to implement, they may nevertheless prove themselves in the long term.

We are certain to see the continued use and development of chemicals within our industry, used sympathetically in conjunction with cultural and biological practises, they will provide us with the necessary tools to produce perfect playing surfaces

Worm casting can leave even the most beautifully manicured courses horrendously muddled. Restrictions on the use of chemical controls have led us to explore various alternatives. One method that has been suggested would be the incorporation of a layer of sharp angular gravel, coarse sand or even broken glass beneath the rootzone, very much like the construction of USGA specification greens. Obviously this would be a costly operation, feasible really only during construction, however the benefits over time may yet make this a prudent alternative, especially with the added drainage benefits which could prove effective as our climate gets wetter and as golfers demand perfect year round amusement. Such barriers to surface earthworm activity have previously met with considerable success.

The persistent problem of animal activity on the golf course has been shown to be effectively managed without resort to chemicals. A great deal of damage can be wrought by many bird and animal species as they seek a tasty subsurface meal. Whilst it is plausible to use a shotgun to prevent damage, several more novel ideas are beginning to appear which reduce turf grass disruption without

wildlife injury. The use of trained dogs on the golf course to chase away individual species of animals and birds that have been identified with specific damage has been initiated and would appear to be both environmentally sound as well as cost effective. The use of lion dung, at spaced intervals, has been successfully employed in the United States to discourage deer activity in those specific areas. It would be lovely to think that we could solve all our problems in such environmentally sound and novel ways.

The problem of pathogenic infestation on fine turf grasses is always a worry. This is perhaps the most noticeable arena in which there has been very little option once an area has been infected than to seek chemical assistance. However, recent developments suggest that natural biological alternatives may offer similar success. The discovery that a compound from Peach Oil may be a suitable substitution for synthetic compounds such as methyl bromide. It has been found that the peach essence kills *Fusarium oxysporum*, *Pythium aphanidermatum* along with various other soil pathogens, which lead scientists to believe that it may be a very suitable fungicide. Equally important though was that this peach oil was found to favour beneficial organisms in that soil.

In the context of natural chemicals another excellent alternative may come from the world's coral reefs. Australian scientists appear to have isolated a group of compounds that disable an enzyme that is specific to the photosynthesis of most weed plants and yet have no negative effect on grass plants. Research like this will undoubtedly provide genuine encouragement in the bid to provide a synthetic chemical free maintenance regime for the turf grass environment.

It is hoped that scientists will be able to provide similar organic based compounds to deal with turf grass pests such as leatherjackets. The control of pests of this nature will no doubt provide a real challenge. Novel suggestions have included the use of scarab beetles, parasitic flies, colonies of Bats or even the introduction of predatory non-indigenous organisms may also prove effective. While these may appear fanciful, it may nevertheless be concepts such as these that may yield success. The introduction

The prospect of managing a turf grass environment without utilising chemicals may one day be tenable. The advances being made in researching maintenance practises, developing resistant grass cultivars and exploring biological alternatives to synthetic chemicals may soon enable us to adopt chemical free maintenance practises.

of the mechanical devices, already in standard use, to apply both water and air under high pressure directly into the soil, may also help to control such pests. At present however it is clear that the controlled use of chemicals is without question the most effective method of dealing with the previously mentioned turf grass dilemmas.

Whatever alternatives there may be to chemicals, there are no alternatives to good greenkeeping practise. There can be no substitute for maintaining turf grasses in their healthiest state. Good cultural practises contribute significantly to reduce the threat of pathogen, weed or pest invasions. The employment of appropriate seed and seed bed sanitation will provide the purest crop. The planting of disease-resistant species and cultivars is essential.

Once established then maintenance practices must be used that promotes the health of the plant particularly at times of potential pathogen or pest ingress. Therein the use of sound cultural practises is vital. There can be no substitute for encouraging better percolation and infiltration as well as a reduction in thatch. Neither can we fail to maintain turf grasses at their optimum heights and with appropriate fertiliser levels to ensure greater

health whilst also ensuring regular dew removal. Similarly keeping cutting reels perfectly sharp and even to ensure minimal plant injury and stress. All of these factors not only contribute to reducing the incidence of disease, but also ensuring that the golf course is presented in the best possible fashion.

The continuation and extension of funding, with regard to alternative as well as conventional scientific research into matters relevant to the turf grass environment, is essential if we are to progress towards a chemical free approach. New research at present has had encouraging results with the use of beneficial soil microbes which greatly contribute to the health of the grass plant. This has undoubtedly become one of the focal areas of current work with positive results regarding plant uptake of nutrients, better seedling establishment, disease resistance and reduced poa annua growth.

Similarly, new developments in the creation of new grass cultivars will continue to be an important focal area as scientists attempt to create new super grasses. Standard cross breeding procedures are likely to be allied with genetic engineering in future years providing we can reconcile our moral dilemmas about tampering with nature. With such tools at our disposal we may see the creation of greens quality grasses that contain compounds that can repel pathogens and pests.

It is becoming apparent that if current research continues there will be significant changes in our industry within that next few decades. If we analyse developments as they have happened during the last fifty years, we can see that every new year has brought a greater number of changes than the last. This trend will continue, as it does in all scientific fields, to provide increasing research that may yet lead to the possibility of a chemical free future for the turf grass manager.

We must however be wary of overconfidence for despite fantastic scientific breakthroughs, there is very little evidence to suggest that we may ever master the turf grass environment without the use of synthetic chemicals. Whether the fungicides that we are creating are natural or not, and regardless of our advances in developing increasingly resistant grasses, neither of these strategies have previously offered a permanent solution to turf grass ailments. Most

plant pathogens have proved themselves able to mutate very rapidly to become resistant to all but the most toxic of fungicides, similarly pathogens are very adaptable at disguising themselves so that they become unrecognisable to plants carrying genes with previously resistant characteristics. We have just cause for concern that any of our new developments will share a similar fate as pathogens continue to prove their adaptability.

It would seem that on present evidence, although there may be some very interesting developments, we must conclude that the controlled use of chemicals will undoubtedly continue to be a very important part of greenkeeping. Most superintendents have adopted the sensible approach by combining cultural, chemical and biological practises as their management policy. This integrated management concept has proved itself most successful and we can be justified in advocating it. While we may be on the verge of a new era, we should undoubtedly stick to the tried and trusted. This though is not to say that we should forever forsake new ideas, rather that these ideas, particularly if they are at the cutting edge, should be thoroughly investigated before adoption.

It appears likely therefore that we must reconcile our desires for a chemical free environment against their proven effectiveness. Nevertheless we should encourage any proven approaches to turf grass management that do not require chemical applications. Good cultural practises are vital to keep the turf grass environment at a healthy advantage over potential pathogenic invasion. Therein the probiotic approach has thus far shown promising results by inoculating the sward to counter turf diseases essentially by promoting healthy growth. No doubt the combination of these two operations will form the cornerstone of future management practises. Continued investment in research projects will assuredly provide many new and exciting possibilities that may forever change work practises within our profession. However irrespective of such hypotheses we are certain to see the continued use and development of chemicals within our industry, used sympathetically in conjunction with cultural and biological practises, they will provide us with the necessary tools to produce perfect playing surfaces.

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Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

The Scottish National Tournament will be held on Tuesday June 12 by kind permission of the management of Drumoig Hotel and Golf Club. The cost of the event will be £17 which includes coffee/tea, filled roll and an evening meal.

Entry will be restricted depending on the number of entries received. Entry forms will be available at all Section Spring outings and from the Regional Administrator.

All entries, with remittance, must be sent to the Regional Administrator, Peter J. Boyd, 10 Meadowburn Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 6TA by Sunday June 3. Cheques made payable to BIGGA Scottish Region.

Peter Boyd

North

New members continue to roll in. This month we welcome the following: Norman Rose from Hazelhead, Graham Dawson from Stonehaven, Roderick Allan from Turriff and Richard Johnstone from Nairn Dunbar, while re-joining the Section is Robert Allan from Hazelhead.

I really enjoyed my trip to the USA for the GCSAA Show in Dallas and the following week went to South Carolina and Atlanta to play some golf. While visiting East Lake, Bobby Jones's home course, I met a certain Kevin Bell who was working there. Kevin roomed with me at the Open when it was at Royal Birkdale a few years back. He was a student at Elmwood College then and is currently doing a year as an intern at East Lake, sampling greenkeeping USA style. A great opportunity for young greenkeepers today and he recommends it to anyone back home thinking about it.

I attended the Scottish one day conference in Dunfermline last month and was delighted to see a large contingent of North members in the 180 or so folk there. A great turnout, maybe due to the weather we have had this winter.

It was a great day and very informative, congratulations to Peter Boyd and the committee for putting it all together. I know I went on about asking everyone to buy their 200 Club tickets this year as it was our only fund raiser, but I didn't realise we were so poor that we couldn't afford stamps for sending them out, or was I the only one that had to pay 69p to the post service to get my letter with 200 Club tickets enclosed! Stewart assures me the stamp must have fallen off in the post box.

All members should be getting their application forms for the spring outing to Brechin Golf Club on May 17 soon. As usual there will be a big demand for places so send your entries in quickly to ensure your place. Head Greenkeeper is ex-Chairman Andy Wilson and we look forward to visiting his course.

I notice in my report for this month last year I was bemoaning the fact that the winters are mild and wet now, so

we don't get the hard frosts and the courses miss out on a little rest. Well this winter has certainly made up for that! From Christmas Eve until early March the weather has been horrible with snow, frost and even ice covering courses. We need a good spring to recover, so here's hoping.

Iain Macleod

Central

This month we welcome another six new members to the Section and they are Austen Cameron and Robert Robertson, from the Dukes Course, St Andrews; David Cartmill and George Anderson, from Downfield Golf Club; Garry McKenna and Stuart Thomson, from West Lothian Golf Club and as I always seem to say, hopefully we will have the chance to meet some of you at our forthcoming events. The Spring Tournament, which is at Scotsraig Golf Club on the 19th of this month, will be your first chance to attend an event so if you haven't done so, get your form in straight away!

Any member who has not received their entry form for this event should get in touch with me ASAP!

The winners of last month's Club 200 draw are Archie Dunn with ticket number 008 and Vice Chairman of BIGGA, Richard Barker, with ticket number 157. Your cheques are in the post!

Thanks to those who got in touch following the Section report in the February issue of Greenkeeper International. S. Connah, T. Comerford, G. Smith, S. Pearson, S. Howie, A. Gibson and a special thanks to I. Knight and S. McGregor.

It was pleasing to see so many Section members at the Scottish Conference in Dunfermline last month and we even managed one from a local club! Well done Kenny Duncan, from Dunfermline Golf Club, sorry Fraser! One member who couldn't make it was "Deek" from Scoonie who (and I have this on good authority) was too busy searching for "lost" treasure on Scoonie Golf Course. Hope you were successful Deek!

Congratulations to Peter Boyd for giving us another superb conference, which was standing room only, and the excellent speakers on the day.

Also at the conference a long standing patron of SIGGA, BIGGA and especially the Central Section, John Souter, of Souter Sportsturf, was presented with an engraved crystal decanter to mark his recent retirement from the profession. May you have a long and happy "retirement."

John has kindly offered to organise a visit for us to the new course being constructed at Southern Gables in Ayrshire, so, if you fancy going, please get in touch with me and we can get something organised for next month possibly.

Hopefully, next month, I will have a report on the football match against the West Section which was organised to take place in Dundee on the 11th March. Incidentally, we are still looking for a manager to take some of the pressure from Andy O'Hara,

so if anyone fancies this highly "paid" (you don't get much money but you get a lot of laughs) position, just get in touch with Andy and he will give you a full "job description."

John Crawford

Ayrshire

The final arrangements for this year's outings have still to be confirmed as I type these notes.

The committee meeting has been delayed because of the snow and is now beyond the deadline for this month's notes. Derek Wilson has made preliminary arrangements with Bridgehouse Bay for May 10 for our spring outing. The usual information will be sent out in due course and I will confirm arrangements in next month's notes.

Any news call me on 01505 683278
Iain Barr

West

Welcome to this month's West Section news. By the time this magazine reaches you we will all have dug ourselves out of the snow drifts of February, probably experienced a false spring and be in the midst of a cold dry easterly, usual Scottish spring. As I write this report many of you will be preparing for your March competitions by clearing four foot of snow from your access roads. Do we start the season too early? Enough small talk.

The Greenkeeper's/Convener's match will probably have been played at Helensburgh GC by the time you receive this magazine as it was scheduled to be played on April 5. I am sure all who attend this day will enjoy playing Helensburgh as much as I have in the past. A report and the results of the day will be printed in the June edition of Greenkeeper International.

The West Section spring outing will be played at Kirkhill GC on April 25. Hopefully there will be a big turn out on the day and I look forward to seeing all the usual faces and maybe some new faces as well. Please try and help Sandy out by returning entry forms on time. Once again, our thanks go to John Scott, his staff and the Kirkhill membership for the use of their course.

Two football matches will have been played during March, one against the Central Section the other against Maryhill Police. Stuart Taylor after many years of sterling service eventually cracked under the tremendous pressure. The management of the section football team put's on a man and has handed over the running of the football team to Gerard (Houllier) Bruen. Gerry would like anyone who may be interested in playing in future matches to contact him at East Kilbride GC on 013552 36335.

On an educational note, Mike Dooner, of Thorntree Landscapes, has kindly offered a West Section assistant/trainee the opportunity to visit BTME at Harrogate next year. In order that all eligible BIGGA West Section members have an opportunity to win this great award the committee are considering an essay

competition. Details of the competition have still to be finalised but the essay will be based on a Greenkeeping subject. So get your thinking caps on and watch this space for competition details. The committee again would like to thank Mike for this very generous award.

During a recent committee meeting it was brought to our attention that due to the rather poor response to recent BIGGA run regional training Programmes in our area that perhaps the content or venue of such events was wrong. To gain a clearer picture of what you the Section member's want from such regional training Programmes we ask that you contact us with any suggestions you may have for the improvement of such events.

What areas of training can we improve on? Is the venue right? Is the cost right? What particular subject's interest you? If you do have any suggestions feel free to contact me on the number given below.

On a committee note we would like to welcome John Yeats on board as one of our trade members. The committee would also like to welcome all the new West Section members these being Victoria Cavinue, Hamilton GC; Christopher Mayle, Williamwood GC; Ian Malcolm More, Aberfoyle GC; Douglas Steele, Aberfoyle GC; Stuart Orr, Aberfoyle GC, and Peter Donald McVicar, Machrihanish GC. We look forward to meeting you all at up and coming Section events.

Well that's my report for this month, so have a successful season & remember if any of you have anything you would like added in the column please call me on 013552 66862.

Brian Bolland.



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North East

Apologies to Matfen Hall Golf Club. Last month, we said the club was to start work on another nine holes in the spring. In fact, they are currently at the stage of seeking planning approval for the extension. Apologies for any embarrassment caused.

Jimmy Richardson

Northern

I apologise for missing last month's report; I wasn't feeling too well. The Spring Tournament will be played on Tuesday 24 April at Filey GC with a 12 o'clock tee off. The cost of this day's golf including a meal, prizes and a good crack is only £15. Payment to be made in full to any committee member before 17 April. Places will be on a first come first in basis, with cheques made payable to BIGGA Northern Section. The trophies that were won at last year's President's Day are for the Spring Tournament. Could trophy winners please bring them back for the Spring Tournament!

The rest of the fixtures are President's Day, Harrogate GC, 19 June; - Roses Match, Sand Moor GC, 22 August; - Invitation Day, Howley Hall GC, 12 September; - Autumn Tournament, Woodsome Hall GC, 18 October; - Winter Golf, Headingley GC, 5 December.

It is with regret that after six years on the committee, four as Secretary and one as Chairman, Simon Heppenstall has decided to step down from the committee. The committee would like to thank Simon for his hard work in keeping the Section going over the years. I would like personally to thank Simon for his help and advice in helping me settle into my role.

Your new Chairman is Jim Brown, and Vice-Chairman is Dave Thackray. Speaking of Jim, you may have read of Jim's departure in February's magazine. I can now report that Jim couldn't leave his beloved Yorkshire and is now staying at Cookridge.

We welcome Jason White, Halifax Bradley Hall GC; Joseph Cassell, Neil Clarkson, Oakdale GC; Alistair Bolch, York GC.; Graham Wilson, Boothferry Park GC; Roger Mackerell, Gary Anderson, Moortown GC; Andrew Cox, Ilkley GC; Peter Aldridge, Lightcliffe GC; Robert Turner, Halifax GC; David Kendall, Craig Finnegan, West Bradford GC; Alan Martin, Heworth GC; Martin Green, Bradford GC; Brian Kirkby, Grimsby GC; David Chadwick, Moor Allerton GC; Stefan Jones, Pike Hills GC; Christopher Barnacle, Fulford G.C.; Tom Bennett, Bradford Moor GC.; Steve Townsdale, Northcliffe GC; Gary Dyson, Pontefract & District GC; David Syer, Branshaw GC; David Bateman, Otley GC as new members.

There is no other news at the moment, if anybody as any then let me know. My address is 67 Asquith Avenue, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9QS; Tel: 0113 2383188; mobile 07790 678572, Email: andy_smith21@hotmail.com
Andy Smith

Sheffield

Let's start this month with a little bit of good news. Congratulations are in order to Gary Marsh, of Lickleton Golf Club, on receiving the runners-up prize in the BIGGA Essay Competition. The prize was presented at BTME by Sir Michael Bonallack. Well done Gary.

On February 1 we held our second Winter Lecture at Rotherham Golf Club. Thank you to James Morley and Richard Tyns for their informative presentations on John Deere equipment.

Entry forms will soon be sent out for our first golf day at Bondhay Golf Club on May 15. Please try to return these forms before the stated closing date. Any information regarding golf days may be obtained by contacting the competitions secretary on 01302 831665
A Sampson

North West

Very little to write about this month other than a snippet of news from Wilmslow Golf Club. Steve Oultram tells me that one of the staff from Wilmslow has just officially retired. He is Ernie Bartlett who is 84 years old, and has worked at Wilmslow for 52 years.

He retired from full time employment at 65, and since then he has worked three days a week. Steve tells me that until he was 74 years old he was cutting fairways with a tractor and trail gangs, and then he took on the job of divoting tees and fairways, while keeping the clubhouse areas clean and tidy.

I am sure we all wish him the best in his retirement years (perhaps he will take up golf).

The Spring Tournament is at Mere Golf & Country Club on Monday, April 23, and you need to apply to Bill Merritt, 225, Utting Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool, L4 9RB enclosing a cheque for £15. Lunch is 12:30pm to 1pm, and the tee is available from 1:30pm till 2:30pm. Get your applications in quick because we are restricted to 50 in number.

The match between the Northwest and North Wales is to be played on Tuesday, May 1, at Abergele GC. The tournament is sponsored by Gem Professional, and I require a team of 16 to retain the GEM trophy. If you are available please contact me as soon as possible on mobile 077615 833387 or 0151 7245412
Bert Cross

Editor's Note:

Apologies for the fact that Bert and Billy Merritt's addresses were printed incorrectly in the March magazine.

Cleveland

It's time to dust the cobwebs off your golf clubs, polish your golf shoes because the Spring Tournament is upon us and this year it will be played at Wearside Golf Club on April 24. There are still a few places left so to book call Barry Walker on mobile 07968 308892/home 01915 650691. The entry fee is £10 including meal and remember a bad day's golf is better than a good days work.

This year's summer knockout, The Cleveland Shield is again sponsored by Cars. Many thanks to them for their very generous and continued support.

To enter again call Barry, the fee £2, the first round draw will take place at the Spring Tournament so make sure you enter before then. If you are unable to attend, Jim Thompson will be entering and hoping to get past the first round this year!

Jim is leaving the Wynyard Club and is moving to join Paul Moore, Course Manager at Darlington Golf Club, and his team. He has been at Wynyard for five years the first six months of which he worked without pay! Everyone at Wynyard wishes him good luck in his new role.

And finally, Tony Burge, Head Greenkeeper at Richmond Golf Club, the man who never leaves anywhere without a prize strikes again, he won a grinder at this year's BTME in a draw put on by Course Care. Any news call 0771913381
Steven Jaques

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North Wales

Not a lot to write about this month. Firstly though, my apologies to Sportsworld for omitting them from the list of sponsors for the Xmas comp.

The Section wishes Dewi Hughes, Head Greenkeeper at Pwllheli Golf Club, a long, healthy and happy retirement.

By the time you read this you should have enjoyed our Spring Meeting at Ruddlan Golf Club. However I write as the Foot and Mouth epidemic is rampant so God only knows. Access to the countryside is being restricted and seeing as most of our courses are surrounded by farmland it can only be a matter of time before our industry is affected. I know it is nothing compared to the terrible hardship that the farming community is suffering and our thoughts must be with them. However on the back of so many course closures due to the wet weather this is the last thing that our industry needs with revenues so badly hit. Let's just hope that by the time you read this it has been eradicated.

The annual match against North West is pencilled in for April 24 at Abergele and if you are interested in winning our Shield back get in touch with Jeremy Hughes.

The college seminar was held in February to much reduced numbers.

Again I think that the smaller turnout than normal was due to the weather, as we all try to catch up on our winter programmes. Everyone I have spoken to who attended said it was very interesting, so thanks go to Graham Wright, the college and the liaison panel for putting it on.

If you have anything of interest please get in touch. See ya
Dave Goodridge

Midland Region

Mid Anglia

All members should, by now, have received a fixture list for the forthcoming events being held within the section for 2001. Entry forms for golf competitions and the Lodgeway Four Ball should also have been received. Should you wish to enter more than one event, please photocopy the main competition entry form. This year's costs for the spring, summer and autumn tournaments are £15 for those aged under 25 and £25 for those aged 25 and over.

Our first golf event of the year is to be held on Thursday 3rd May at Overstone Park Golf Club, Northamptonshire.

As there is no qualification requirement for the National Tournament this year, it is hoped that - subject to sponsorship - the Section will partly fund two members to attend. The tournament will be held at Birkdale and Southport & Ainsdale Golf Clubs October 1 and 2. The cost for entry is £70 plus accommodation

and expenses. The Section is also hoping to arrange a visit to Queenswood Golf Club, Surrey, some time this year; details to follow.

Draws for the Lodgeway Fourball will be made at the Spring Tournament, so please ensure that Steve Mason receives your entries by May 3. As mentioned previously, this will now be a straight knockout competition.

The Golf Management Trophy will be held at Verulam Golf Club this year; the date is yet to be confirmed. Teams representing each club must be made up of: Head Greenkeeper, Captain, Secretary and a Committee member - preferably Greens Chairman. Our Regional Administrator, Les Emery, who is organising the event, will forward invitations for entry to clubs.

Paul Lockett.

East Midlands

This year's Go-Kart evening was held at The Wymeswold industrial estate on February 21. Again the evening was generously sponsored by Toro-Lely to the tune of £10.00 per person plus prizes. This year saw a record attendance of 26 racers, with a format of 4 teams of five, and 1 of six, competing in the endurance race format. After 1 hour 40 minutes of high speed driving and tactical pit stops, the eventual winners were team C, which consisted of the following members. Richard Barker, Matthew Chambers, Gavin Robson, Maurice Hume and Kevin Kinzer. For the third year running Adi Porter finished as a runner-up.

Our thanks go to Andy Humble of Toro Lely for sponsoring the evening and to our Section Chairman Gavin Robson for organising the event, the next Section meeting is at Kirby Muxloe GC on April 10 for the Lecture evening. With the support of the members we will again organise a Go-Kart for next winter.

By the time you have read this article I shall of returned from my trip to Vancouver, and for those of you who attended the lecture evening at Kirby Muxloe GC you will have heard all about it. However, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bernards Grinders for their very generous sponsorship, which enabled a team of ten delegates (including myself) to attend the combined CGSA and WCTA in Canada.

Antony Bindley

Midland

Firstly, I would like to congratulate three members of the green staff at Copt Heath Golf Club who, by August of this year, will each have enjoyed 25 years of service with the Club. They are Derek Smith, Paul Hofman and Steven Tipper.

Copt Heath Golf Club are also leading the way in terms of their maintenance facility. Jeremy Pilcher was kind enough to give me a tour of the new building which is equipped and finished to the highest standard.

All credit to the Club for investing in their future and taking the lead in an area so often disregarded. Jeremy

is contactable at Copt Heath and would welcome anyone interested in investing in a new facility of their own.

Sports World have once again been kind enough to arrange an excellent day at the Hardi factory in Hinckley. Tours were taken by Ann who managed to be informative and light hearted while maintaining the discipline (must be the army training!).

Rigby Taylor's Turf Management Workshop held at Hittington Heath Golf Club on March 1 was also very informative with contributions from Andy Cole, of Grass Science; Mike Finney, of Omega Science; Chris Pie, of Dow Science, and Mike Higgins, of Ruffords.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you all at Great Barr for the Spring Tournament on May 14 so please post that entry form as soon as possible.

Phil Gates



South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

Essex

In this month's very brief report we welcome a host of new members, they are:- Stuart Wren, Great Hadham Golf and Country Club; Steve Jackson, Ilford GC; Ben Scrivener, Stock Brook Manor GC; Ian Wood, Romford GC; Boyd Evans, Trent Park GC; Mark Kiff, Bishop Stortford; Scott Colgate, Bishop Stortford; James Pickess, Chelmsford GC; Michael Dillway, Three Rivers Golf and Country Club.

I hope to see you all at our next Section event which will be at Frinton Golf Club on April 25.

A seminar covering all aspects of Golf Course Design was held at Writtle College last month. Thirty members ventured out to hear David Kidd hand out valuable advice to all considering any design work. Thanks to David and also to Sherriff Crop Care (Graham Paul) who sponsored the evening.

Another thank you, this time to Neil Peachey and Tuckwells for sponsoring the production of our fixture cards which you should all have by now. If not contact Martin Forrester (01245) 603131. One amendment to the new cards has to be made. The date is given for the Winter Trophy but not the venue which is Three Rivers Golf and Country Club.

Well that's about it, I did say it was brief. If you have anything you would like including in the magazine just let me know.

See you all at sunny Frinton.
Steve Crossdale

Sussex

With spring knocking on our doors and summer just around the corner, (ha ha), I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all of all of the forthcoming golf days we have organised around the county.

Starting off with the spring meeting at Cowdry Park in April which would have been played by the time you read this. You should have all received a fixture list containing the other dates.

These days are organised for the benefit of all greenkeepers who are members of BIGGA.

I sometimes hear people saying that it is too expensive and how would it benefit me?

Well, as for the latter, not only are you going to be in the company of a bunch of lads who share interests, whether it be greenkeeping, or golf, you get to hear about things going on in the trade, wether it be a new fertiliser or a new machine which someone has bought, all good information.

As for the standard of golf, that is a different matter. The average handicap being 24 shows you that you don't have to worry about your own game.

So to the money side. Well, being that we are very fortunate that the clubs give us courtesy, your only expense is your food and refreshments and maybe a raffle ticket. This on average comes to £30 for a day's golf, and with the possibility of going home with a great prize, which are donated by the trade, and the company of friends you can't really moan too much.

While I am on my soapbox, I recently attended a workshop course held at Cooden Beach Hotel. The course was computer skills and was run by a chap called Martin Burkinshaw in conjunction with BIGGA. I enjoyed two very informative days in the setting of a 4 star hotel, and at the end received a certificate to go on my CV.

So what is my problem? Well in a nutshell, the company or do I mean lack of it, (5 in total out of 300 members) you see the problem. The days are set up for our benefit they are sponsored so the cost is brought right down and this is thanks to the companies who are Golden, Silver and individual key sponsors.

The cost to my club? (Remember this is education and beneficial to both parties) was £75! This was a computer course, which may not be too beneficial to you, but there are many different subjects, which are covered.

If you are interested in finding out more you can call or email Ken Richardson at BIGGA headquarters. The contact details are on page 10 of this magazine. Well, sorry it has to be done just to remind you that there is a lot of work being done for the benefit of yourselves.

To change the subject. If any one is interested in a grinding course, which will be held at one of the local collages, please let me know.

It will work on the format of being introduced to new products as well as hands on experience, I need to get some idea of numbers as this sort of day/half day takes a lot of organising. Thank you.

Jon Budd
email: jonboy69@ukonline.co

Surrey

Monday March 5, about 11:15 and only a few days away from the Gentleman's Dinner at Walton Heath on the 9th. My mobile phone rings and, from Royal Epsom, Mr Douglas Fernie is the bearer of bad tidings. Foot and Mouth precautions close and our annual South East Section Golf Day and Dinner at our new Chairman's course is postponed. Derek Farrington will let us know as soon as possible if Walton Heath can fit us in at a later date.

Happier tidings now with the news that Mark Bellamy, from the Drift Golf Club, and his wife, Deborah, have a second child, a baby boy born on December 26 2000 and weighing in at 8 pounds 7 ounces. We wish Kieran Thomas health and happiness and a full head of hair.

Also celebrating are Derek and Linda Cunliffe whose daughter, Jessica Louise, 7 pounds 3 ounces was born on February 9, 2001.

Remember, please keep me informed of all events at your Surrey Club so that I can spread the news and gossip every month in Around the Green

Brian Wilmott

London

I am sure you have all seen either in newspapers, or on the television, the utter devastation caused to agriculture by the recent outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease and even in our modern industry much higher pressures can only begin to imagine the impact on each farm around the country. Those directly affected, or indirectly, depending on how you look at it are Jim Cassidy, at Ashbridge Golf Club; Gerald Bruce, at Berkhamstead Golf Club, and Steve Brocklehurst, at Harpenden Common Golf Club. All these courses have been closed over the past week to protect cloven hooved animals on the golf course and as I write this in early march there may well be more as you read this.

Congratulations to Phil Chiverton, formerly Course Manager at the Buckinghamshire Golf Club, who takes up a new post at The Grove Estate just outside Watford. Welcome to the Section, Phil.

Interestingly for the historians among you The Grove was an Elizabethan Country Estate, circa 1924, and was sold to the hon. Thomas Villiers in 1753 who went on to become the Earl of Clarendon. Now you may think that I'm rambling on but those of you who know Watford well will know that there is a Clarendon Road and a Villiers Road - Interesting or what!

For those locals out there you would probably remember The Grove as the British Railway Management Centre as it was acquired by London Midland Scottish Railways (LMS) as an

H.Q. in the event of war.

(Don't stop me now, I'm on a roll). Ralph Trustees Ltd, who own the prestigious Athenaeum Hotel in London and the Runnymede Hotel in Surrey, bought The Grove in 1996. The building of a golf course to complement what I'm sure will be a fantastic hotel is underway. The best of luck to Phil Chiverton and his staff.

Now you can see what happens when you guys don't get in touch with any info from the Section! You have been warned.

Here at Sandy Lodge we say goodbye and good luck to Assistant Greenkeeper Steve Nicholson, (the only man who can produce a gherkin jar from his sleeve), who moves onto pastures new. We will miss all your magic! We also welcome Scott Walker, who joins us from Grimsdyke Golf Club.

A date for your diary has been confirmed. The Spring Meeting will take place at Stockley Park Golf Club on Tuesday, May 1. It's also looking promising for a new venue sometime in August, hopefully I'll have more to reveal in my next report.

Don't forget to give me a call with any news, however small on 01923 835549

Robert Phillips



South West and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

South Coast

It's been a very quiet month, so there is very little to report. It's still not too late to enter the Spring Tournament, which is on Thursday, May 3 at the Army Club in Aldershot. Contact Chris Sturgess on 02380 494084 for more details.

The only other item to mention this month is Ken Lodge's retirement. Ken rang me to ask if I could let everyone know that he is retiring in May. He is having a get together on Friday, May 11 at Atherley Bowls Club, Southampton, at lunchtime.

Everyone is welcome to go along and have a drink or two with Ken.

I'm sure that everyone in the Section would like to wish Ken a long and happy retirement, and thank him for all the work he has done for BIGGA in his time. Cheers Ken.

I put my phone number in the column a couple of months ago and asked anyone to phone me if they had something they wanted put in the around the greens article. I had one call from Ken, and he got what he wanted put in it. So don't be shy if you want something printed! Phone me on 07939 860841. It will go in.

Well, that's it for another month. Mike Cartwright.

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South Wales

As our evening lectures come to close on the 11th of this month with the Annual Quiz BIGGA versus IOG. I think you would agree that they have been very successful. As a reminder, the combined evening of Advanta & Biotol, held on Feb 14, was well attended with Jim Foulton of Advanta describing seed formation, diseases and plant production. Then Gerard Cuncliffe, of Cardiff-based Biotol, give a talk on how their products help turf propagation with the use of micro-organisms specifically for the use in soil.

Thanks to you both for your time and Pencoed College for the use of the facilities - not forgetting our sponsor of the evenings Avoncrop.

It might be an idea to get your golf clubs out and dust them over as our first tournament begins at Southerndown Golf Club on May 9 with a tee off time 1.30pm playing for the Spring Tournament. The Summer Tournament then will be held at Llanwern GC on July 11 so there are some dates for your diaries. By the way, please would last years' tournament winners return their trophies 28 days prior to these events.

The Welsh Golf Union held a seminar at the Vale of Glamorgan G&CC on March 5 with 19 Golf Clubs in attendance with guest speakers Howard Swan, Education & Training Manager of BIGGA, Ken Richardson, and Peter Winter, Head Agronomist of the STRI.

Also Rigby Taylor set up Road Shows in our Section, one at Park Howard Llanelli and the other at Royal Porthcawl GC. Thank you to them.

Unfortunately our seminar had to be postponed on February 28 as the Foot & Mouth crisis hit the agricultural trade. Thanks to Scotts for their support and for holding it on another day; look out for the new dates.

Must mention the return of secretary Peter Lacey and Richard Whyman, of the Devon and Cornwall Section, on their trip to Canada to the CGSA Golf Course Conference and Trade Show in Vancouver 24-27 February sponsored by Bernard & Co. - they have too much info for me to mention but I am sure they will let you know what it was like. Lastly, during our evening lec-

tures in conjunction with the IOG it is my pleasure to announce that the Queen in her New Year Honours list awarded Bill Hardiman of the South Wales Branch IOG an MBE for his lifetime service to sports turf management. Excellent!

Richard Hatcher

Devon and Cornwall

This year's Avoncrop-sponsored February Section meeting had to be cancelled due to the Foot and Mouth crisis which has swept the country.

Hopefully we can rearrange the meeting for later on in the year.

As most of you are aware, I was lucky enough to have been one of ten BIGGA members selected to represent the Association on the Bernhard-sponsored trip to the Canadian Conference and Show held in Vancouver.

The trip proved to be of great educational value to all of the delegation.

The visit consisted of course visits to North View Golf and Country Club, host of the PGA Tour Vancouver Open and to the private members' clubs at Point Grey and Marine Drive. During the visits we were able to discuss with the Superintendents their maintenance practises which included budgets, staffing, machinery used, materials used, working practises, unions, membership and green fees.

The seminar programme was very well attended with the conference room full for every seminar. This was a reflection on the high standard of speakers presenting papers at the conference which included our Chairman, Clive Osgood.

The new friendships made during the week with the Canadian Superintendents and our own delegation, will, I am sure, continue for many years to come.

I would like to thank BIGGA and Bernhard and Company for selecting me to represent British greenkeeping in Canada, I would also like to thank Sam McLean and Peter Hampton for their hospitality and knowledge shown to the whole delegation, hopefully many more BIGGA members will be able to benefit in the way I have from such a visit in the future.

Richard Whyman

South West

I was hoping to give the results of the Section's first tour event to played at Stinchcombe but the weather curtailed any chance of the event taking place. The snow that fell did not deter about 20 members attending, it was the fog that got the better of the event. Thanks go out to all the Stinchcombe staff for all their efforts to accommodate us. Some members would not let the weather stop them from playing a round of golf. They made their way off Stinchcombe Hill to play at the Manor House to find a warm welcome and a course in excellent condition. If you have not been recently it is well worth the effort, Paul Bishop and his staff are doing sterling work.

Speaking of which, Chris Jack is leaving the Manor House to become not a rep, but a house husband. He will be replaced at the Manor House by John Keengahan. The Section wishes them both luck in their future careers. I feel Chris has the harder role! Nathan Marsh, Section member from Long Ashston, is having a year's training from March 2001 in the sunshine state of Florida. Anyone going can get in touch with Nathan at Bonita Bay Golf and Country Club, Naples, Florida. Good luck from all the Section.

The Tour's next event is on May 24, A Greenkeeper/Amateur at Woodspring Golf club, Bristol, please reply to Kevin James ASAP. Anyone who has not received a booking form can contact Kevin on 07788 327677. The committee, at the last meeting, have decided that people can now turn up to events on the day and to pay Kevin a £2 administration fee which will be added to the cost of the day. It would be appreciated if you could telephone at the earliest point in time to let us know you will be attending the event. Guy Woods is organising a seminar. People who are interested and want more details please contact him on 01225 333928.

Knobby Knight can be contacted on 01225 760634 for more information on team matches, the next one is on the 3rd of May 2001 at the Manor House in Castle Coombe and is against the Secretaries, Good Luck lads!

David Bougen

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

The Section held an irrigation talk during January at Allen Park Golf Club Antrim which proved very successful. The company, Drilling and Pumping Supplies Ltd. from Newtownards Co. Down were invited along to give the members an insight into the success of their company in the supply, installation, service, and maintenance of irrigation systems which they have installed at many golf clubs throughout Northern Ireland.

Company Director, Alastair Wilson, left us in no doubt of the company's commitment to giving good reliable service. Alastair also invited Gary and Gilbert Maddisson from England along to give talks on the Rainbird range of irrigation equipment and the Heron irrigation controllers.

Many thanks to Maddisson Irrigation who made the journey over from England and Alastair Wilson of Drilling and Pumping Supplies Ltd. who provided a lunch for all the members present. Thanks to the caterer Paul Corrigan for the very enjoyable lunch and Antrim Borough Council who allowed us to use the clubhouse facilities at Allen Park. If anyone has any irrigation problems or maybe would like to install a system why not contact Alastair Wilson on 02891 818347 or mobile 07711 013849.

I would like to thank the members for making the effort to come along and I sincerely hope you gained more knowledge on the subject of irrigation. The following clubs were all represented; Massereene, Allen Park, Shandon Park, Jurgan, Malone, Fort William, Holywood, Castlerock and Portstewart. The Section's first golf competition will be played towards the end of April. We are hoping to play the new course at Loughgall. The exact dates and venues for the competitions will be confirmed in March. All members will receive a letter from the Secretary outlining the Golf Days for the year. I would like to welcome Liam McVeigh, Silverwood Golf Club, Edmond Morris, Aberdelghy Golf Club and Gordon Nimmo, Royal Co Down as new members to the Section this month.

Ken Henderson

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