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Scott MacCallum met up with Victor Jamieson of Rain Bird at the home one of the company's highest profile clients...

'Bird's in The Belfry



The venue for a meeting with BIGGA Golden Key Company, Rain Bird, was not too difficult to agree. With a substantial distance between BIGGA HOUSE and the company's UK base, at Lewes, near Brighton a point between the two was the preferred option and where better than The Belfry, the scene of Rain Bird's biggest, and probably highest profile, UK contract to date.

Having won the initial contract to install full fairway irrigation to the recently-built PGA course, Rain Bird was in pole position to secure the contract when the famous Brabazon course was upgraded and a full wall to wall irrigation system was agreed upon. On a real roll now De Vere Hotels decided to go the whole hog and fit out the Derby course as well and again Rain Bird were chosen. So now the company can boast that it has supplied all 54 holes on the development which will be in all the headlines later this year when the Ryder Cup is played - for a record fourth time - over the Brabazon course.

"It was good news because the fact that we won one job, completed it and then won the next shows how pleased De Vere was with what we had done. Pleased with the product and pleased with the work carried

out by the contractor, MJ Abbott," said Victor Jamieson, Rain Bird's Area Manager for UK and Ireland.

However, it is not just the high profile contracts which brings a smile to Victor's face, he is also delighted at the number of regular golf clubs, many of which perhaps hadn't until recently considered installing automatic irrigations systems, which he now counts as clients.

"Smaller golf clubs like the Rain Bird product. They like what our new sprinklers provide and they like the reliability of the decoder systems which have been around now for around 12 years and have good track records."

Another benefit of the Rain Bird systems from a smaller club's perspective is that, like an over grown school boy's train set, you can start in a small way and then build on what you've got.

"You can start with our smallest wall mounted controller and at any time in the future add on to that system. Even our smallest system can be extended to a PC controlled system without changing the hardware out on the golf course," explained Victor.

He is also finding that more people from smaller golf clubs are asking for specific products having heard from neighbouring clubs on the benefits.

"It used to be only the big clubs who asked that. Smaller clubs just asked about an irrigation system in general terms," said Victor.

The company, which has its roots in Los Angeles, California, has enjoyed substantial growth in the UK

and Ireland over the last five years and Victor has a theory on why that should be the case.

"I would put it down to our insistence that our product is installed well and we only supply to certain contractors who we know will do a good job - companies like Ocmis Irrigation, MJ Abbott, Arden Lea Irrigation and a number of smaller but equally skilled companies. They have been doing a very good job for Rain Bird and this has helped to enhance and spread our reputation.

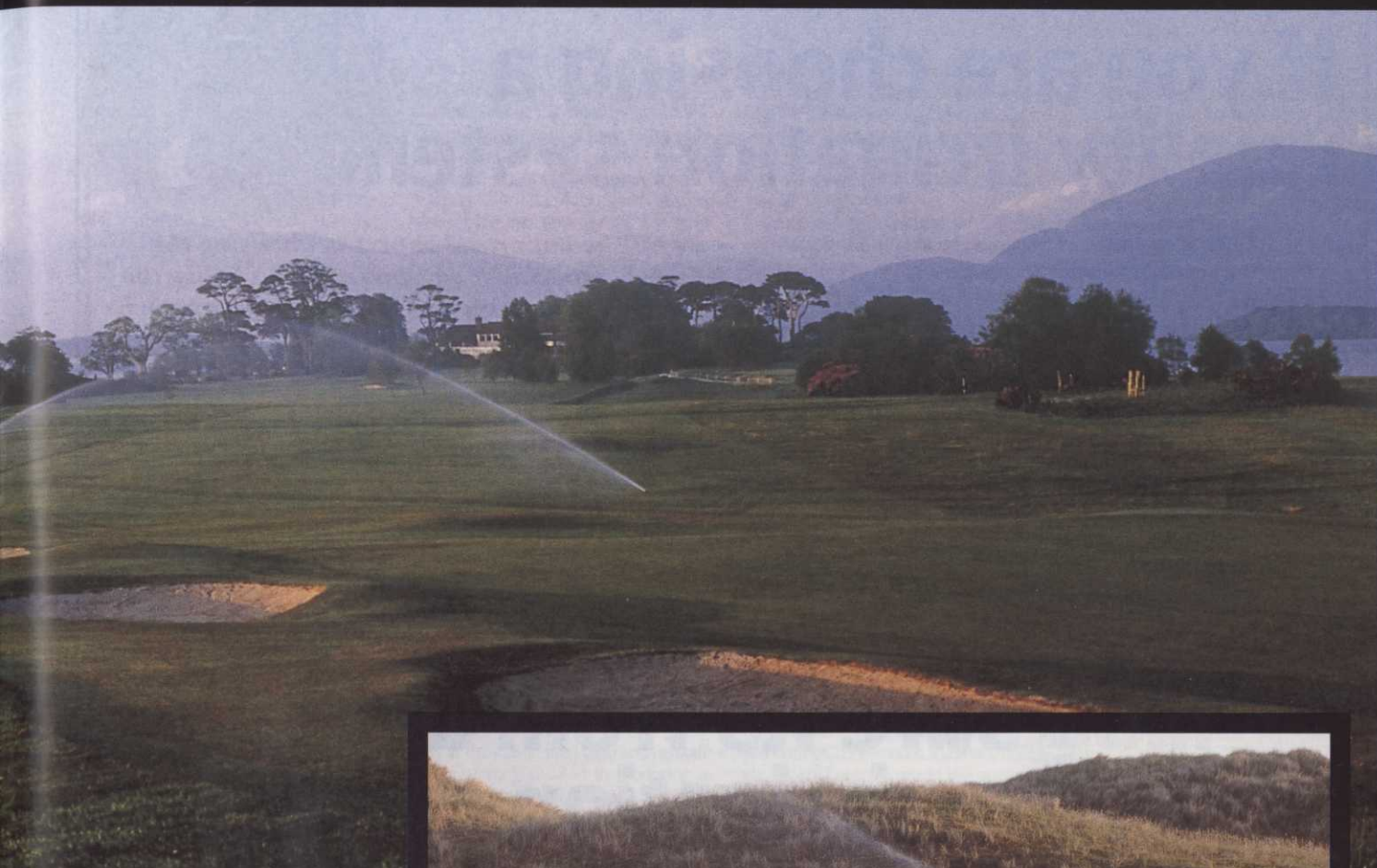
"After all you are only as good as your installer because if things go wrong, customers tend to blame the equipment rather than the installer," said Victor, who added that only 20% of a contract covers the cost of the equipment, the other 80% is the cost of the installation.

Having teams of good quality installers is not something that can be put down purely to good fortune. Much work is done on building sound relationships between Rain Bird and the contracted companies and ensuring that they are up to date on the innovations that emerge from the Rain Bird Research and Development boffins.

"We give a lot of assistance to contractors with regard to installing our equipment to our specifications. They get a lot of training, particularly on the control systems, from our full time Service Manger in the UK, Mark Ganning, who can be on hand to provide technical assistance at all times.

"Having said all that we are fortu-





nate that the contractors do take pride in producing a quality installation."

One of the benefits Victor finds in working for a privately-owned company is that they are not weighed down in as much bureaucracy as might be found in other companies of similar size.

"For example we can talk directly to the engineers who are developing our product and we can send requests to the States to develop new equipment for use in the European markets.

While Victor feels the current family of Rain Bird golf course controllers will probably remain much as they are for the foreseeable future they are having what he describes as the "bells and whistles" becoming attached to them now.

"It started with the radio remote control facility and we now have a telephone remote control so a greenkeeper can be sitting at home, discover it is raining, dial in and stop the system. Likewise he could start all or parts of the system from home if he wanted to."

Over the last five years Victor has witnessed a startling rate of progress in the industry much of it made possible by the increased knowledge and ability of the greenkeeper.

"More and more greenkeepers are trained to use PCs whereas a few years ago the technology did not appear relevant. A lot of them are using their irrigations systems properly as a result and taking full advantage of the control that is avail-

able to them. Five years ago a greenkeeper might have run all his sprinklers for five minutes every night in the summer regardless of whether it had been sunny or raining. If they were a little more conscious of their system they might make some percentage adjustments day by day to everything on the course.

"Now people are making adjustments down to the specific sprinkler head to cater for high or low spots and other factors that might prevail."

To assist in the development of the greenkeeper's irrigation knowledge Rain Bird puts on training courses.

"We put one on at Celtic Manor recently and it was great because they also act as refresher courses for people who perhaps need reminding of how to use the system at the beginning of the new season," explained Victor.

With as much rain as many parts of the country have endured in recent months you would have thought selling irrigations systems would have been set alongside the task of selling

ice cubes to the Eskimos and Victor admits he is praying for a long hot summer.

"It has been a tough time particularly for the contractors who often haven't been able to complete the work they began during the winter as quickly and efficiently as they would have hoped and I think if the wet weather does continue over the summer I think it is going to make it very difficult," he explained, adding that from his side he has attended several Extraordinary General Meetings at golf clubs torn between installing irrigation systems or not as the case may be.

"These have got heated at times and yes I have got involved at times as well. There is still the odd member who thinks that bowsers should still be used on links courses and doesn't see the benefits of irrigation as a management tool. Used properly it shouldn't change the condition of the course. For example, used for the establishment of overseeding the benefits are enormous. In the past overseeding work, and therefore

money, could be wasted if the weather was not as expected and irrigation gives a guarantee that there will be some success."

The benefits of responsible irrigation are becoming increasingly well known and that is why companies like Rain Bird continue to enjoy success - a brand new European headquarters have just been opened in Provence in France, to take advantage of the growing mainland Europe market.

The continued growth of golf there will be apparent in the Ryder Cup when Europe's finest 12 golfers, probably containing a few Continentals, compete against the Americans over the beautifully manicured Brabazon course at The Belfry. Victor will be watching, proud of the small part his company will have made to the success of the event.



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Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

The BIGGA Scottish Conference was held at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline on Tuesday March 6. This was our fourth visit to the BLC which over the years has improved its facilities and is now regarded as one of the best Conference venues in the Central belt.

The speakers provided us with a variety of topics, all relevant to the industry today. In the morning session we had Peter Jefford leading the way with his talk on Top Dressing and Rootzones Today. This was a most informative and topical subject. Next we had Sandy Armit, from the Double A Trading Company, who explained in great detail the care and maintenance required in taking care of your machines.

After the break we had Jim McKenzie, Director of Golf for Celtic Manor Hotel G&CC, who led us through the construction of the golf courses at Celtic Manor and the problems associated with such a large project, but also the tremendous satisfaction in having been involved in constructing quality courses. Last in the morning session, and at very short notice, we had Tim Colclough, who stepped in for Neil Baldwin who unfortunately called off through illness. Tim presented a first class paper on Control of Black Layer in Fine Turf. Our thanks to Tim for taking the time and effort to attend with very little time to prepare.

After lunch we had David Golding, from the GTC. David kept us up to date with the present education and qualifications available in the industry today. Following David, we had John Philp, from Carnoustie, whose enthusiasm and commitment to greenkeeping is well known. John spoke at length about greenkeeping, Carnoustie, and the standards necessary in greenkeeping today. Finally, to finish the day, we had Peter Hampton, from Bernhards. With many clubs now with their own grinding machines, Peter's talk on the Benefits of Sharper Reels was most informative and relevant.

The Scottish Region of BIGGA would like to place on record their appreciation to the speakers for taking the time and effort to travel, in some cases quite a considerable distance, to attend and present their talks to us. This year's Conference had the highest number for many years with 168 attending.

The winner of the bottle of malt whisky was Sydney Mercer, who has our Vice Chairman, Richard Barker, to thank for drawing his badge from the box.

Finally, during the Conference, our Chairman, John Scott, had the pleasure of making a presentation to one of our long standing and most respected supporters of the Association in Scotland - John Souter, who has recently retired from Souters Sportsturf Ltd.

John, throughout the years, was a supporter of SIGGA and BIGGA and provided support in so many ways to greenkeepers and to the Association in general. The Chairman wished John well in his "alleged" retirement and assured him he would be made most welcome at any of our events in future.

The annual BIGGA Scottish v Secretaries' Association fixture took place at West Kilbride GC on Tuesday April 3. The Secretaries were looking for revenge as they had been beaten quite soundly last year in the corresponding fixture.

Things didn't look too good weather wise for the first three games that went out. It was pretty miserable at this point, however, things improved and it remained dry but windy which seemed to suit the Secretaries as their lead pairing convincing won the first match against our Chairman and partner. Things evened out and with one match still out on the golf course the Secretaries were leading by five matches to four and it was looking good for them. However, the stalwarts from the Kingdom came good in the shape of Derek Scott and Stuart Sime who squeezed home by one hole to earn us a draw.

We therefore retained our trophy! Wins were recorded by Archie Dunn and George Brown, Jim Paton and Ian Barr, Steven Sullivan and Douglas McIntosh and George Morrison and Derek Wilson... and, of course, the heroes from Fife.

Our thanks to the Captain and Committee of West Kilbride for affording us the facilities and use of the clubhouse. Considering that it is pretty early in the season Jim Paton and his staff are to be congratulated in producing a course in such fine condition.

Finally, and with the last word to Andy O'Hara, who was sharing a car with our heroes, Derek and Stuart, he states and I quote, "It was the longest journey of my life. They replayed every shot from the first to the last."

Peter Boyd.

North

Another batch of new members to welcome to the Section this month. First of all Andrew Macrae and George Duncan, from Golspie GC; then Edward Brown, from Montrose GC; Colin Irving from Craggan GC, and Paul Murray from Ballumbie GC a new course near Dundee. I hope you lads can get along to our outing this month on the 17th at Brechin GC, where you will be welcomed by the usual large turnout of North members.

There has been a change of date for our Autumn outing to Keith GC, we now go there on September 6 instead of the 13th, so put that in your diaries, further details will be sent out in August.

Spare a thought for Stuart Robertson and his staff at Craige Hill GC near Perth. They built a new tee this Winter and came into work one day to find vandals had taken all the newly laid turf off and ripped it up. Work this winter has been hard enough without added problems like that.

The Scottish Greenkeepers Championship will be held at Drumoig GC in Fife on June 12, not too far away from our area, so let's have a good turnout from the Section. The BIGGA National Championship is at Royal Birkdale and Southport and Ainsdale on October 1-2, so this is a chance to play at an "Open Championship" venue, which will be well worth the travel involved.

The evenings are beginning to stretch out and the weather warm up, so let's hope for a bit of growth and a good summer ahead to make up for the awful winter we have just endured, I didn't realise there were so many shades of green!

Iain Macleod

East

Well here we are into another season and we are still looking for some decent weather!. The committee are putting the final touches to our list of fixtures for this year so if you haven't had it by now, apologies for the delay.

By the time you read this we will have had the first major of the year, the spring tournament at Dunbar Golf Club. The report will be in next month's magazine so let's have a big turnout and some good weather to go with it. I look forward to seeing you all at Dunbar as does our Chairman Tom Murray and the committee. We hope to welcome along some new faces to what is always a great day.

People on the move this month are Brian Divine who has been an assistant greenkeeper at Ratho Park GC for nine years. Brian is moving on to Niddry Castle GC near Winchburgh as an assistant greenkeeper so all the best to him for the future in his new job from the Section.

Also all the best to anyone else on the move that we don't know about. The Section committee has changed the time of their meetings to night times and not during the day as we previously had. I think this is better for everyone as we all have so many days away from work ie, golf outings, conferences, seminars, btme, etc, etc so if anyone would like anything brought up at the next meeting get in contact with a committee member and it will be discussed at the next meeting. The date of the next meeting is Tuesday, May 15 in the Harrow Hotel, Dalkieth at 7.30pm. The committee is hoping to run the annual dance this year after we had to cancel last year's due to unforeseen circumstances. Details will be announced soon, so come on support the annual dance and your Section. The social committee will be resurrecting the skittles nights and the quiz night that were so successful a few years ago so watch this space for forthcoming events in 2001.

Section Event?

www.bigga.org.uk/events.html

This winter I am thinking of running a winter pairs greensomes competition which would be played as a matchplay knockout competition with the first round in October and the final being at a neutral venue in April. If there is enough interest the entry forms will be sent out in the summer which you fill in with the partner of your choice and send back with the entry fee of £5 then after the closing date the handicap committee will make the draw and it will be on view at the autumn outing at Monktonhall GC and it will also be in this column in the September/October edition of Greenkeeper International.

I will be making an announcement at the spring outing at Dunbar about this tournament. If you can't make it, please get in touch and I will give you all the details, as it will extend the Section's golfing season to 12 months of the year. Well that's it all for now I hope everyone has a good season and we see you all at Section events throughout the year. Remember it's your Section so support it now! Here are all the usual numbers to contact me on -

Home: 01968 661313

Work: 01968661721 Mobile: 07719580449

Email: cjy263@netscapeonline.co.uk

Chris Yeaman

Central

This month we extend a warm welcome to another four new members and they are Andrew Ramsay, from Bishopbriggs Golf Club; John Myles, Chris Smith, and Gavin Speedie, all from Gleneagles Golf Courses and, as I say every time, hopefully we will get the opportunity to meet you all at some of our events in the near future.

The proposed football match between the Central and West Sections did not take place last month as planned for some unforeseen reason (the West section felt that Dundee was too far away from Glasgow!). It's the same distance both ways! A practice match was played instead, when the Dundee boys (or should that be boys?) took on the rest of the Section, a hard fought game ensued, resulting in a four all draw, giving team manager, Andy O'Hara, plenty of choices when selecting his team for the challenge match when a suitable venue can be arranged. Andy is still seeking a successor for the position of team manager, so if anyone is interested, just get in touch with him and he will fill you in on all the details of what is involved, including salary etc.

Congratulations and every success for the future go to Section member Robbie MacMillan. Robbie who has had spells at Falkland, Balbirnie and Thornton golf clubs has decided to further his career and experience by accepting the post of Senior Greenkeeper at Leynir Golf Club in Iceland which is situated in the town of Akranes ten miles from the Icelandic capital of Reykjavik.

I recently attended a meeting of Section Secretaries at BIGGA HOUSE and although every Section organises events on numerous different subjects it appears that we all have the same problem in getting more members to participate in anything other than golf tournaments! So come on, how about letting your Secretary know what you want from your section. Even if it's a change of secretary!

On the subject of golf tournaments, it has been suggested that we organise another one in December, just before Christmas, with a social function (Lap Dancing was actually mentioned!) to follow. Anyone interested? Seriously, if you are interested in any event being organised please let us know.

At the time of writing entries for the Spring Tournament at Scotsraig Golf Club are fully subscribed, so if you wish to ensure your entry for the Autumn Tournament which is being held in September by courtesy of Murrayshall Hotel and Golf Courses in Perthshire, please return your forms in plenty of time. The views on and around the courses at Murrayshall are something else, so don't forget your camera.

On a personal note I would like to thank everyone who called/sent their best wishes during my recent stay in hospital, hopefully by the time you are reading this I will be back at work. Thanks everyone.

John Crawford

West

Welcome to May's West Section news. Hopefully by the time this report is printed we will all be experiencing some warmth and good growing weather.

Football new's first, the West Section played Maryhill police on March 20 and

had a convincing 6-2 win. The goal scorers on the day were Kevin Collins (2), Sandy Brawley (1), Gerard Bruen (1), Eddie Devine (1) and one goal from the policeman who joined our team. Man-of-the-match on the day had to go to Alastair Taylor in goal who pulled off a string of good saves to keep our lead intact. Gerry would like to thank all who turned up on the day and hopes it will encourage more Greenkeeper's to put their name's forward for future games. Watch this space for future fixtures.

New member's to be welcomed to the Section are Steven Laird, Renfrew GC; Stuart Crossan, Pollok GC; Christopher Lamma, Pollok GC; John Kelly, Shotts GC; Andrew Muir, Paisley GC; Iain McFarlane, Whitecraig's GC, and Craig Drummond, Paisley GC. We hope to see you all at the up and coming section outing's 6 events.

Congratulations are to be extended to Gerard Bruen who has been appointed Deputy Headgreenkeeper at Williamwood GC. Gerry has worked with myself for the last eight year's at East Kilbride GC and I personally wish him every success in his new position.

A moderator's meeting was held in the East Kilbride Hilton Hotel on March 22. The meeting was well attended by D32/33 assessor's. Several key points about keeping your certificate current and better communication between assessor's and training provider's were covered.

Ronnie Bunting and Sue Gudgeon, GTC, stated they were pleased with both the turn out and the content of the meeting. Well that is about it for this month, I hope you all have a good season.

Brian Bolland. 013552 66862
 PS. I know I spelt Houllier wrong in the last report, apologies but, it's not as if it is the first, time Gerry's name has been miss-spelt.

Gleneagles Chapter

My name is Ian Morrison and I am writing to introduce all students and full members to a new initiative created this month between BIGGA, Textron and The Gleneagles Hotel. The new chapter incorporates Gleneagles' own student scheme called the Gleneagles Excellence in Golf Award Scheme (GEGAS), with the new student chapter initiative from BIGGA.

The GEGAS scheme has run for eight years and was originally conceived after a review of several college courses, which included golf management, turf science and sports turf management. The concept behind the scheme was to offer students a sandwich year that would identify their needs, skills and ambition to succeed in their chosen profession, whilst allowing them to develop within an environment that is committed to training and personal development.

Gleneagles select eight students from colleges worldwide, and now due to a new initiative from Dean Cleaver, Secretary of FEGGA, a proportion of candidates will be guaranteed from Europe.

While at Gleneagles, we have the choice of three championship courses to work on, the King's, Queen's and, the newly renamed, PGA Centenary Course (formally the Monarch's). To add to this hands on work experience, there is a student training room which has been kindly supported by the schemes sponsors Textron Golf Turf and Specialty Products,

who along with Gleneagles have recognised the need for future development of potential golf course superintendents and managers.

Textron in conjunction with Scottish Grass Machinery not only fund library materials and lap top computers to aid with assignments, but they also provide a bursary award for the best students. This offers a financial award for our hard work and a fantastic opportunity to go to the annual GCSAA Conference and Show in the USA to network and gain industry contacts.

The scheme offers students the chance to invite external speakers to Gleneagles and to travel to some of Gleneagles' extensive contacts. Wesley Walker has just returned from Riffa Golf Club in Bahrain and we are running an exchange scheme with Bandon Dunes Golf Club in Oregon, USA.

Has the scheme worked and all the time and money invested been worth it, well that can be answered with a resounding yes. Previous students have not only been taken on by Gleneagles, but have gone on to represent their profession at the highest level. Examples include Todd Gilmour, who is now Deputy Superintendent of a new venture in Hawaii and Steve Johnson, who is the Superintendent at Riffa Golf Club in Bahrain. Also, last year's winner, Damian Brown, has recently returned from Australia with the sole purpose of maintaining the greens on the PGA Centenary Course for the Gleneagles Scottish Championship, the Scottish PGA Championship and the WPGA Invitational all to be held here this year.

The involvement from BIGGA has arisen from ideas by Ken Richardson, education and training manager for BIGGA, and talks with Jimmy Kidd, Director of Turfgrass at Gleneagles. Both have recognised the need for students to have their own representatives within the profession, for students to have a voice at BIGGA regional and national conferences as well as a network of managers, superintendents and experienced contacts throughout the industry that they can approach for ideas, help and support.

So that is the history, and why BIGGA, represented by Ken Richardson and Scott MacCallum, arrived at Gleneagles on April 3, to present the GEGAS students with their Student Chapter Membership. The students included Christopher Baldock, Robert Coughlan, John Milne, Lee Relf, Keith Walton, Andrew de Wet, who was appointed secretary, and myself, Ian Morrison, who has the honour of being the first Chairman of the Gleneagles BIGGA Student Chapter.

We intend to utilise all the opportunities that are now open to us and would like to hear from other students, colleges and employers who might be interested in setting up similar student chapters within their respective organisations. So until next month thank you to BIGGA, Gleneagles, Textron and Scottish Grass Machinery for the fantastic opportunity to make a difference within this great profession.

Please contact me on 01764 694429 for details or just to say hello.
 Ian Morrison



Northern Region
 Douglas Bell
 Tel: 0151 431 0433

North Wales

Firstly, the following notes of appreciation should have appeared two months ago, however there seems to have been a mix up at HQ.

Two committee members have left the Association and industry to go to positions new. Phil Davies has left to

concentrate on his family-run business. We are all indebted to Phil for the professional way he went about his work in all aspects of our industry, from greenkeeper, through sales and education, his enthusiasm and knowledge always shone through as the winter lecture programmes he originated showed. He will be a hard act to follow.

Gary Edwards has also left. Our Section Secretary for the last three years, Gary took up the position when the Section was in decline and only ever missed one committee meeting. He was instrumental in getting our Section some of the best

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courses in the world to play on and tried to get a balance to cater for all our members to ensure people didn't feel left out. He achieved that and in the last three years there will have been a tournament not far from you. Our best wishes go to both of you.

In March, I went to a couple of free seminars. The first was organised by DCE Focus where papers were delivered by Rufford Soil Technology and Alderburgh Atlantis Systems among others. I know most of you are familiar with Ruffords but I'd never seen the Alderburgh drainage system before - it looked the way forward

to me. I think I was the only greenkeeper there and I even got a CPD certificate.

The next seminar was at Conry GC organised by the WGU. It was superb and well attended with speakers including Alistair Beggs, David Williams, Ken Richardson and Derek Green with the WGU President, Mike Cole, chairing proceedings. We are very lucky to have a governing body which is so committed to greenkeeping in Wales, remember they even give grants for greenkeeper training. Hats off to a very forward thinking Union.

Congratulations are in order to Tracy Schofield (nee Williams), greenkeeper at

Vale of Llangollen GC, on her wedding in Memphis in January and Paul Lowe on his appointment as Course Manager at Reduddlan GC.

Welcome to new members Alwyn John, Dylan Hughes, of Pwllhelli GC, and Chris Grain, of Borth Ynystras GC.

Danny Fitzgerald has moved to Prenton GC (Hey this is good I'm getting information).

The Midlands Section has challenged us to either paintballing or carting - transport to be provided, cost approximately £20-£25, in the autumn/winter. Any interest contact Trevor Johnston Tel: 0151

336 6675. Also Sportsworld are organising a match against the Midlands at Northop on May 23. Anyone interested contact Terry Adamson Tel 07775 621272.

Talking of Sportsworld I attended their seminar at Carden Park in April. It was very well attended and very well put together, however, "Poa Annua. Our Friend," I think not.

Our spring tournament was held at Rhuddlan GC but unfortunately the rain came again and the comp had to be played over 11 holes. It was a real shame as the course was immaculately present-

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Web Site: <http://www.redexim.com>

ed by the new Head Greenkeeper Paul Lowe and his team. Our thanks go to the Captain and officials of the club for having us, the caterers for the excellent meals and the steward for providing the liquid refreshment. I for one made full use of it seeing as how my round never even got to the 1st green.

Our thanks go to the sponsors, Acorn, ALS, Bathgate, Osmans, Sportsworld and Walkers.

The results were :- 1. Shaun Pritchard, 45 net; 2. Darryl Davies, 46; 3. Less Parry, 47; 4. Jeremy Hughes, 48. Winning guest was Terry Dodd and 1st trade member, Terry Adamson. There was only one 2 and that was Darryl Davies who chipped in out of a bunker!

Regional Qualifiers are 0-9 Darryl Davies and Jeremy Hughes. Reserves Allen Lewis and Dave Parry. 10-18 Shaun Pritchard and Les Parry. Reserves, John Humphries and Stu Hayley. 19-28. Eurwyn Vaughn and Chris Evans. Reserves, DA Roberts and Darren Anderson.

Bring me sunshine,
Dave Goodridge

Section Event?

www.bigga.org.uk/events.html

North East

April 5 was the day we played our Spring Comp at Warkworth GC. We would like to thank the committee for giving us courtesy once again, and to Alan Darby, Head greenkeeper, and his staff for the excellent condition of the course everyone who played will vouch for that.

The wind played its part on this testing 9 hole links with the scores been on rather the high side nevertheless I will only print the trophy winners.

Best Gross. John Hutton, 77, Whickham GC; Best Nett. Russ Black, 80-8-72; Best Assistant Nett. James Storey, 79-6-73 Foxton Hall GC.

Qualifiers for Northern Region Finals will be forwarded shortly to Bert Cross. Jimmy Richardson

North West

The Mere Seminar in March was an excellent day, and although applications had been slow coming in, we finished with 80 including speakers.

The day started with an excellent talk by Jay Dobson on Disease Management, and Ken Richardson Education and Training Manager, and Tracey Maddison, Membership Services Officer of BIGGA, updated us on Education and Membership including the many benefits included in your membership.

After lunch we had a demonstration of Gravel banding by North Staffs Irrigation. The demonstration took place on the fairways, and although the ground was saturated the results were good using Lytag to backfill the slits. Peter Jefford, Managing Director of Rufford, guided us through the choice of sands and soils for top dressing and John Hughes, of Oliver Seeds, spoke about grass species and their uses.

I would like to thank all the speakers for their part in making it an outstanding seminar, and Mere Golf and Country Club for allowing us to use their superb facilities. The "Summer Tournament" will be held at Mottram Hall G&CC on Tuesday June 12. Please send your entries to Bill Merritt. 225 Utting Avenue,

Clubmoor, Liverpool L4 9RB. Including a cheque for £15 not later than Friday, June 8. Lunch will be served 12-12.30pm Tee from 1.30pm Any enquires please contact me on 07761583387 or 0151 7245412

Bert Cross

North

By the time you read this I trust a good time was had by all at the Spring Tournament at Filey GC. This golf event was sponsored by G Adamsons and a report will be in next month's magazine.

Next month on Tuesday, June 19 is President's Day at Harrogate GC. kindly sponsored by Acorn. The closing date for entry along with full payment of £15 is 12 June 12, which can be made to any committee member.

Another change of date is Invitation Day, which is now Tuesday, September 11. We welcome John Grainger, Filey GC, as a new member.

There is other news at the moment, if anybody has 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

Hopefully everyone has managed to return their entry forms for our golf day at Bondhay GC on May 15.

Contacting the Competitor Secretary would be a lot easier if I were to give out the correct number, which is 01302 371674 and not the one printed in last month's article. Apologies for the inconvenience caused.

Between March and April the Section welcomed 11 new members. They are: Dean Bagley, Alistair James Bolch, Joseph Cassell, Jamie Paul Harris, Christopher Long, John Douglas McCollum, Steven Nixon, Leonard Frith, James Hoyle, Derek Ollerenshaw and Philip J. Riley. We look forward to seeing you are our golf days and other events throughout the year.

On March 1 we held our third lecture day at Rotherham GC. A very big thank you to Tony Kvedras, of Symbio, for a very informative presentation and to Rotherham Golf Club.

Well that's about it for this month but don't forget to call me with any information on 01142 477976.

A. Sampson



Midland Region
Peter Larter
Tel: 01480 437507

East Midland

On Monday March 19 at The Belfry, Brabazon course our Section Chairman, Gavin Robson, played for the E.T. Breakwell team in The Belfry Trade day. Also as part of the team was Kevin Kinzer and another E.T. Breakwells rep and the Head Greenkeeper at The Forest of Arden course. Despite some difficult conditions the team finished a very respectable third place, in a AM-AM format Stableford with 73 points. On behalf of our Chairman I would like to thank The Belfry and E.T. Breakwells for their invitation.

This month we see a few Greenkeepers on the move and I would, on behalf of the Section, like to wish them all the best for the future. Chris Weir moves from Assistant Greenkeeper Kirby Muxloe GC to Assistant at Scraftoft; Kristian Hibberd Mechanic/Greenkeeper at Birstall GC to Kirby Muxloe GC in the same position, David James, Assistant at Scraftoft to First Assistant at the delightful course of Luffenham Heath, and finally Martin Oliver, of Willesley Park, who as moved from Willesley Park GC into a new profession. Martin had spent several years in greenkeeping and was well respected by his fellow professionals. I would like to take this opportunity to wish him all the best in his new career.

Also on the move is Les Emery our Regional Administrator, Les has moved to the position of Secretary Manager at Beedles Lake Golf Centre, in Leicestershire. Again on behalf of the Section I would like to wish him well in his new position.

Antony Bindley



South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

East Anglia

By now everyone should have received a copy of the fixture list for this year, our first meeting will be over. Our thoughts will be concentrated on our courses and the season to come, no doubt that by July we will be in the middle of a drought and

there will be a hosepipe ban (Ha Ha). If any member has not received a fixture list please contact me on 01728 452759 and I will send you one.

On March 26 & 27 I spent two informative days at BIGGA HQ with nearly all the Section Secretaries throughout the country; the meeting demonstrated to me how hard all the staff are working on our behalf. As everyone knows last year was a bad year for all concerned in our industry machinery and fertiliser sales affected by the weather and a lot of our courses under water for long periods. This has caused some companies to cut back especially on sponsorship, but it is good to know that the team at Aldwark are out there fighting for the sponsorship and the income needed for the running of the magazine, competitions, awards and benefits for the membership. There is an open invitation to those who wish to visit BIGGA HOUSE, you only have to make a telephone call and you will be made most welcome, remember that all the staff are working very hard on your behalf.

If any member has a problem that BIGGA can sort out, the team will be there to help them in any way they can, also for more information try visiting the BIGGA website which is going from strength to strength.

Under Ken's watchful eye the Education Department is making huge strides forward with courses at HQ and others in Regions and Sections up and down the country. On this note did you know the everyone is entitled to help with training from the Government. The initiative is called and Individual Learning Account which entitles you to £200.00 of training per year. It pays 90% of the cost of computer training and various percentages off other training.

To apply for your account phone 0800 072 5678 and apply for an application form. Please remember that in order for our Association to progress, we must give the team our full support, they are there to help us all.

Ian Willett.

Surrey

Surrey Section Committee met on April 4, the agenda was as follows,

1. Roles and Responsibilities 2. Tom Smith - Canadian Trip and SISIS Bowl (a report from Tom will be printed in next month's mag) 3. Fund Raising 4. Winter Lecturers, Visits, Quiz Night Etc. 5. Any Other Business.

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quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest!

The first golf event is or was, depending on when you get your May edition of Greenkeeper International, on May 10 at the Hindhead, North Hants Golf Club host the next competition on June 7. If any member has not got a copy of the events 2001 please phone Ian Sellars on 07855251047.

And now news from around Surrey, starting with marriage which took place on Easter Saturday in Worksop.

Congratulations to one of the more senior members of the Surrey Section, A Head Greenkeeper who has been at Maldon Golf Club for many many years, yes the one and only Mr Alec Bradshaw is now a happily married man. Alec's wife is Mary and we all wish her and Alec every happiness for the future.

After marriage a family and news of two births, Joshua Anthony the 6lb 1oz son of Tony Bremer and wife Tracey made his appearance on March 10 and increases the membership at Dorking Golf Club by one. Chobham Golf Club will also be pleased that the potential ladies' membership has also improved with the arrival of Alice May, 6lb 11oz on the 27th February. Scott and Tracey Reeves her proud parents and Tony & Tracey Bremer have our warmest Congratulations.

The date for the Mcmillan Tankard competition at Sunningdale has just been confirmed by Brian Turner as August 28. The numbers will be restricted so please get your application forms in as soon as you receive them.

Please remember to keep me informed of all your news.

Brian Wilmott



South West
and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

Devon and Cornwall

Roserow Golf Club was the venue for the Aventis & Supaturf meeting held on Wednesday March 28.

Our golfing members competed for the Supaturf (Head Greenkeepers & Trade) trophy and the Aventis trophy for assistants over 13 holes because of the weather conditions, as usual our non golfing members course walk left the club house at 10.30am and enjoyed a most enlightening guided tour of the course by Neil

Taylor, Roserow's Course Manager.

After a superb lunch Paul Clifton, Aventis, and John Mullins, Supaturf, representing our sponsors for the day presented the golf prizes as follows.

Supaturf Trophy for Head Greenkeepers & Trade. 1. John Parr, Exeter; 2. Gordon Tambllyn, Mullion; 3. Jeff Mills, Taunton. Aventis Trophy for Assistants. 1. Neil Williams, Stover; 2. Tony James, Tehidy. 3. Neil Kent, St Enodoc.

Special Congratulations go to our Chairman, Cary Rawlings, for his hole-in-one on the 12th. Cary was presented with a Supaturf dart board and case by John Mullins.

Our afternoon educational talk rounded off the day, with Jeff Mills Course Manager Taunton and Pickeridge G.C presenting his excellent talk on "Poa". The Section would like to thank Jeff for his superb presentation.

Also the Section would like to thank the day's sponsors Supaturf and Aventis for their continued support and to Roserow Golf Club for allowing the section use of their excellent facilities and to all of Roserow's staff who made our day run so smoothly, with special thanks to Course Manager Neil Taylor and his crew. Richard Whyman

Phone a friend?
www.bigga.org.uk/contact.html

South Coast

By the time you get this issue of the magazine, we should be enjoying a heat wave. I would've won the lottery and will be lording it up at my country mansion.

These are my dreams, to have both of them come true would be quite nice, but I'll make do with a heat wave.

After six months of misery and winter blues, and not to mention the foot and mouth disaster, I'm sure we could all do with it.

Hopefully the Spring Tournament would have been played by now, (it's only the 5th of April when I write this!) Congratulations to the winners, I will reveal your identities in next month's article.

Forthcoming events to make a note of are the Match 'v' Secretaries to be played at Upavon GC on June 14. And I know the Spring Tournament has only just been played, but the Summer Tournament is only around the corner, July 12 to be exact.

This is to be held at Broadstone GC, details of the price and times for day will be in next month's issue.

Well that's about it, so I'll leave you all to work on your sun tans.

But the final word I have saved for myself, I would just like say hello to three avid readers. So hello Gerald, Judith and Steph (the office assistant!)

Mike Cartwright.

South Wales

The Summer Tournament is to be held at Llanwrn GC at 1.30pm tee off on July 11 & July 25 the match versus the Golf Club Secretaries at 1.30pm tee off at the Grove GC. Shortly a flyer will be sent out regarding the Rigby Taylor Matchplay Championship so sort yourselves out a partner. The finals to be held at Royal Porthcawl GC October 19.

Well what happened with Westurf I ask? What a disappointment.

Birds of Cowbridge held a Machinery Demonstration at Royal Porthcawl GC on April 4, Demonstrating Textron equipment. I recently had an opportunity and attended a John Deere training Day at their HQ at Langar, Nottingham, which was well worth attending and if you ever have the chance it is worth going along. To tell the truth I went with a gathering from Royal Porthcawl and Ross On Wye GC. Thanks to Frank Sutton's John Deere agent, not forgetting Mike Kealing for getting us there and back safely. Congratulations to Steve Monk in his new capacity at Carmarthen GC as Greenkeeper Supervisor. Bring you up to date with the Quiz night at Pencoed College and the golf at Southerndown the Spring Tournament next month.

Richard Hatcher

South West

When you all read this installment of Around the Green, Manchester City will still be in the Premiership, we will be basking in the sun with T-shirts and shorts, and we will have forgotten about the longest wettest winter we have encountered. If all of this doesn't happen then let me share a very useful phone number with you, 0345 909090, The Samaritans.

I could not attend the last event at Thoulstone Park because Cirencester have been chosen to hold this year's Ladies' County Championship before Easter. Here at Cirencester we pride ourselves on our Environmental Policy, so

much so ducks are paddling on the greens, birds are fed a good diet of chafer and leatherjackets, and any seeding we try to do on wear areas becomes the staple diet of friendly pheasants.

I'm sure that the people who played in the last tournament enjoyed their day, the results were very kindly sent to me by Kevin, these are his words.

With only 18 members turning up on a very wet day Steve Britton the Head Greenkeeper had the course in good condition for ducks. (it seems environmental issue is growing) After deliberating whether or not to venture out into the wet weather we all decided to change the format of 4BBB to an individual Stableford over 12 holes. This was a task and a half with the strong wind and occasional showers. I think that we all walked off quacking like ducks but we had great fun with it. The hospitality was second to none and our thanks go out to all who worked at Thoulstone Park and many thanks for the courtesy of the course.

The results of the event are as follows: 1. B. Shave, 28 pts, 2. C. R. Sealey (again), 3. J. R. Acton, 21 pts, 4. N. Bungay, 20 pts (back 3) and 5. S. Coles, 20 pts. Our thanks go out to Martin Townsend and Scotts for sponsoring the day and for supplying the prizes.

The next event for your attention is the Greenkeeper/Amateur at Woodspring GC Bristol. This is an opportunity to invite a non-member who receives courtesy of the course. If you have not received an application form by now contact Kevin James on 07788427677.

A new fixture for this year is a Inter Club Challenge; This will be held at Weston on Tuesday June 5 at 5.30pm. Each club can enter a maximum of three teams of two; these can consist of Greenkeepers, Secretaries and Captains/Chairman. Numbers will be limited any queries again contact Kevin James.

D Bougen



See you all next month!

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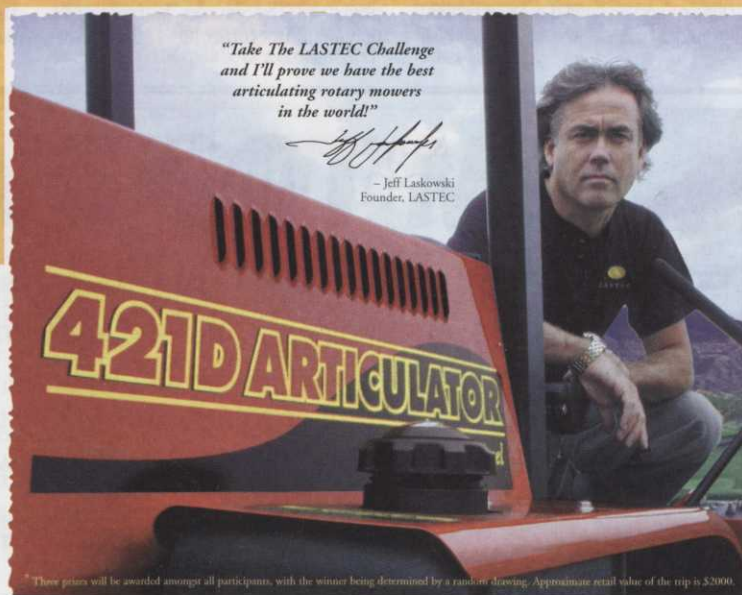


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