



The surveys can be done by hand held equipment or, as above, with a quad bike trailing the sensors

to appreciate. Imagine attending a Green Committee armed with information which highlights why the 8th has always suffered from waterlogging.

"We also have the TurfTrax Ground Management Systems where we install a weather monitor, coupled with sensors in the soil so that we can cross reference everything in real time. We are monitoring the weather as well as the soil conditions and cross referencing the two for presentation in a data recording system.

"We are taking the subjectivity away from the greenkeeper so that when he's asked why the course was closed last Sunday when the one down the road was open he can say well we had 10mm less rain over 24 hours and here are the data to prove it," explained Colin.

TurfTrax is also working closely with architects because of the obvious benefit to the architect of knowing what is below the surface before he maps out the route of the proposed golf course.

"People often go ahead with the construction of sports facilities, based on an assumption of what is required and unfortunately the wrong decisions are made which costs a lot not only in financial terms but also in cultural terms with people not having access to facilities," said Justin.

"In almost all the cases in which we've been called in it has been because problems have arisen, problems we could have predicted and

solved before they became an issue," he added.

A full survey can take from as little as three days to up to two weeks if it is to cover a detailed survey of everything including the provision of topographic maps which are accurate to around four to five centimetres.

"We spend a long time working on offering different service levels tailored to what the greenkeeper is going to value and offering some straight forward packages at affordable prices so that everyone is catered for," said Adam.

Asked if, in five years time, the dream was that a quarter of the clubs in the country would be using the service, Adam's hand moves in a fashion more often seen on Bruce's Play Your Cards Right when someone is considering what to predict after a 4 has been revealed.

"Realistically, experience will teach us how readily it will be taken up but in other industries we've had our arms bitten off."

However, he does admit that golf might be more difficult to break into than agriculture.

"In some ways agriculture is an easier sell because it comes down to a straight forward economic argument

whereas in golf, although there is an economic argument, it comes down to quality which is not as easy to quantify in financial terms.

"The key is that we offer a holistic service and offer a huge range of skills - analytical agronomy, nutrition, soil physics and engineering. It is close to becoming a one-stop shop," said Adam.

In addition they have a close tie-in with Cranfield University.

"We are cross referring to Cranfield so it gives us independent status. We would not get Cranfield's support if we were not along the right lines," said Justin.

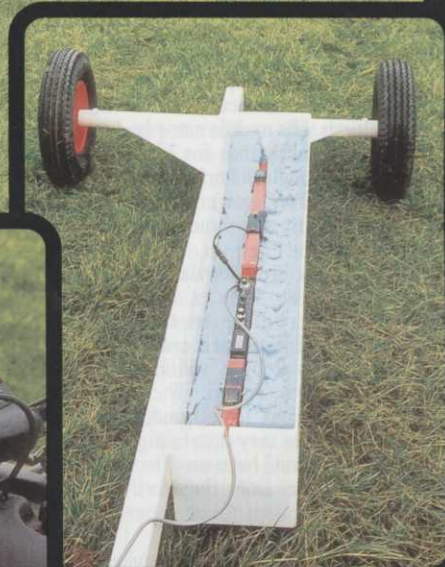
TurfTrax's decision to become a Golden Key Supporter of BIGGA is borne from a desire to become known in the industry and to assist in the education and development of BIGGA members.

"We are very pleased to be part of the Golden Key Circle as it encour-

ages education of not only the young greenkeepers but the more mature as well. We want to move forward with BIGGA, who itself has come on leaps and bounds, and see the industry become more electronic and scientific in handling information and making management decisions based on information supplied," explained Colin.

The company has grown quickly in the last 12 months going from a staff of three to 22 with five sets of quad bikes and scanning equipment and they will be moving to a state-of-the-art headquarters in Bedford shortly.

"We are looking at substantial growth over the next two to three years and we have put resources, in terms of management and money, into the company to make sure that this business doesn't want for either with a view to being one of the major players in this industry for the next 100 years. It will be quite fun doing it," said Adam.



Above and left. The information is emailed back to headquarters and can be analysed within half an hour



Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

Northern

We have a new member this month in William Craig, who is a greenkeeper at Kirriemuir Golf Club. Welcome to the Section, William.

Well, the weather this year has certainly started with a bang, if anything the snow and frost has been worse than it was at this time last year and that was bad enough. I hope everyone's course looks well rested when the good weather finally returns and your greens come out unscathed.

One stalwart member of the section who will miss out on all the cold weather is Allan Grant, formerly of Fraserburgh Golf Club. Allan and his wife, Margaret, are heading for the States, Australia, New Zealand and a couple of other countries on a mini world tour. Allan, a die hard Celtic supporter, will unfortunately miss out on Celtic winning the league in March but he will be back to play in the Section golf outing in Elgin on May 16 this year. Allan maintains that the flights are paid for by his winnings from the Senior Section at the outings. His middle name begins with M and it stands for Modesty. Seriously though, I hope your holiday goes well and you and Margaret have a safe trip. It's thoroughly well deserved.

Application forms for the Scottish conference at Lauder College, Dunfermline, will be in the post shortly and if last year's conference is anything to go by it will be worth going down to attend. There are excellent speakers set up and I am sure it will be a very interesting day. The weather can have an effect on the attendance, from the North in particular, so I hope it has improved by then.

As was mentioned in a previous report, the system for awarding the points for the Patrons' Awards is to be looked at but at the time of writing it has not yet been decided. If any member has any particular views on this please feel free to contact me on 01997420155 as your thoughts would be very welcome. It is due to

be discussed at a Board of Management meeting this month and I will report on this in a future magazine.

200 Club renewals will be going out shortly and as it is the Section's only real way of making money and therefore keeping section outing costs down, it will be as well supported as usual.

Iain Gunn

Ayrshire

A good New Year to everyone and I hope you all had an enjoyable time over the festive period and 2002 is already treating you well.

After a blank couple of months I will bring this column up to date firstly with our AGM. A healthier than average turnout saw four members co-opted on to the committee with three members retiring from the committee. There was a good discussion on how to best take the Section forward and create more interest for the members. Some ideas are to be taken forward to the next committee meeting. The following committee was elected to serve for 2002.

Chairman - Iain Barr, Largs Kelburn; Vice Chairman, To Be Confirmed; Past Chairman, Duncan Gray, The Pines; Secretary, Derek Wilson, Irvine Bogside; Committee, Jim Paton, West Kilbride; Dennis Tweddle and Brian Aitken, both Turnberry; Robert Bruce, Stewarts. Newly elected, Martin Lothian, Turnberry; Marshall Sloss, Beith; George Morrison, Largs Kelburn, and Barry Crawford, Old Prestwick.

Retiring from the committee are George Brown and Jimmy Johnstone, both Turnberry, and Brian Finlayson, Barassie. A big thank you to all three for all your work and help over the past years.

Congratulations to Paul Tulloch, West Kilbride, and Wallace Mercer, Skermerlie, on winning the Patrons' Award for Ayrshire. They received their award at the Patrons' lunch in Stirling along with the other Section winners. Part of the prize is a trip to BTME 2002 at Harrogate, and by the time this is printed it will all be over, so I hope you enjoyed your trip lads.

Any news or views please call me on 01505 683278, see you next month.

Iain Barr

Central

We are up and running again with new applications for membership of the Section and this month we extend a warm welcome to Jody Wilson, Colin McKay, John Henderson, Nicholas J-Torsfield, John Watson and Michael Petrie who are all from Crail Golfing Society, in Fife.

Six new members from the one club can't be bad although I don't know what Allan will do if they all want to attend the Spring Tournament!

The date for the Spring Tournament, which is being held courtesy of Kingsbarns Golf Club, is Wednesday, May 1, and this is sure to be a very popular venue. Please return your entry forms in plenty of time. The date for the Autumn Tournament, courtesy of Duluth Golf Club, has yet to be confirmed but it will be in late September.

I know I keep going on about "Club 2000" and the number of members who do not buy their allocation of tickets (1 or 2 maximum), but this fund raising venture is the only means of income for the Section. As we do not get any funding from HQ it is vitally important that we generate our own sources of income so please try and give us some support by buying your allocation of tickets. To this end I will wait until next month before asking you individually to return your unsold tickets. I'm all heart really!

Remember all trophy holders please arrange to return them to me as soon as possible.

That's all for the moment, not much I know but I am sure there will be a much longer column next month.

John Crawford



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North East

A recent seminar for the Northern Region was held at Longhirst Hall GC and a good day was had by all who attended though only a small percentage of members were there. This was a bit disappointing considering it was on the doorstep.

Still it was their loss as we had excellent speakers and I was assured that everyone enjoyed the day.

It was good to see Graham Chambers, Course Manager of the host club, make his debut as a speaker giving us the short history of Longhirst and its development over the last three years. Well done Graham, perhaps we will see you standing up at a future BTME at Harrogate.

Plenty of news from Slaley Hall just come in. Firstly, education is happening there. Brian Clark and Ian Millar are both going for NVQ Level 3 and Pete Geddes is finally going for NVQ Level 2. Good luck lads.

Brian Clark has also been promoted to First Assistant and M. McKenna recently moved from Matfen Hall up to Slaley Hall.

Ian Hutton, Head Greenkeeper at Garesfield GC, tells me he has a wild boar roaming around the course. Apparently it's dug up one of the greens and is causing havoc elsewhere. He assures me it's definitely one of them and he is looking for help in trying to catch it.

Jimmy Richardson

Northern

Coming up later this month is a seminar at Howley Hall GC on Wednesday, February 27. You should have already got the details about the day in the mail shot. If not, then get in touch with me and let me know if there is any subject you want covering either as part of a seminar or as an intensive one day course.

Other dates for your diary include:- Spring Tournament, Wednesday, April 24, Bedale GC; President's Day, Wednesday, June 19, Otley GC; Invitation Day, Tuesday, September 10, Bingley St. Ives GC; Autumn Tournament, Thursday, October 17, Thirsk & Northallerton GC; Winter Golf, Tuesday, December 3, Crosland Heath GC.

That's all for now, if anybody has any news or ideas then let me know. My address is 67 Asquith Avenue, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9QS; Tel: 0113 2383188; mobile 07790 678572, Email: andy@northernsection.co.uk
Andy Smith

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North Wales

A big thanks to Dave Goodridge for the last 2 years of writing the Section notes. Dave is taking a well earned break and we wish him well.

Hope all those of you who took the trip up to the BTME 2002 show had a good time, both on the educational side and, all the new products on display around the stands. Also not forgetting Harrogate's vast range of local hostellers where many of you were spotted enjoying the cups of tea in Betty's tea shop?

On to business. The AGM was held after the Christmas Golf Tournament at Conwy (Caernarfonshire) GC and thanks once again to David Lewis and his team for preparing the Links course to a high standard. The newly elected Committee is as follows;

Stuart McCall, Chairman; Andy Campbell, Secretary; Trevor Johnston, Treasurer; Terry Adamson, Education; Andrew Acorn, Press; Jez Hughes, Match Sec; Steve Roberts & Don Pemberton, Members.

Our golf venues for this year, spring at Andy Campbell's Carden Park Golf Complex (Soft Spikes Only) autumn is at Steve Jones's Pwllheli GC and the Christmas Tournament is at Ian Farrell's Caldys GC.

We are also pleased to have Bill Lawson as our official starter for the competitions. This may be scrutinised at our first event by official Carden starter, Mal Edwards. However, we look forward to the 'crack' anyway.

The delegation of Section members visiting the GCSAA show in Florida this month 3-10 will be Pat MacAteer, Nefyn GC, Andy Campbell, Terry Adamson & myself and if we do see any of you there we will buy you a waffle.

Next month we will focus on the trials and tribulations Allen Lewis, at Lianynymech GC, went through when 'sodium chloride' was poured on his greens.

Any news, views or information you have please contact me on Home: 01925 263394 Fax: 01925 269622 Mobile: 07778 162162

E-mail: acorn@supanet.com. Job's a good'n.

Andrew Acorn

North West

December 6 was the date we had the AGM and the President's Cup Tournament at Wilmslow Golf Club. Once again we must thank Steve Oultram and his staff for preparing the course. The day started with a hard frost, and when we arrived at Wilmslow at 10am the whole of the course was solid white with frost, and the greens staff were standing by with warmed up hand mowers ready to cut the greens by hand as soon as the frost abated. Well, the frost did melt shortly after 10am and true to form the staff cut the greens before we commenced play. The rest of the day was very favourable, with a warm winter sun all day, and the last of the 56 players finishing just before the sun dipped and the night enveloped the course. The golf was followed by the AGM which was short and sweet, and that was followed by the Christmas dinner. The Presidents Cup was won by Paul Walker, and was presented by the new N/W President, Peter Jefford, and of course everybody took away a bottle of something. I would like to thank Wilmslow Golf Club for once again allowing us the courtesy of the course, Steve Oultram and his staff for arriving for work in the dark and having to hang about in freezing conditions until the frost melted. Also many thanks to Gwen and David Chason for a lovely Christmas dinner and keeping the bar open all day & night. Gwen and David retire in early spring and we all wish them a long and happy retirement.

John Wright, from Southport Municipal Golf Course, has just retired and tells me he has worked for the council for 44 years. He told me he does not know what he will do to fill his time. I must have a talk with him as I have been retired eight years and I am busier now than I have ever been.

The fixture list for the year's events is now completed so you will receive your copy soon, anybody not receiving a copy contact me on 0151 7245412 and I will send you one immediately. Also you will receive an application form for the Mere Seminar in March. Please support the section and attend if possible. Any news, contact me.

Bert Cross

Cleveland

The Section AGM was held at Darlington Golf Club recently. The meeting was reasonably well attended but could have been better. Minutes of the meeting will be sent to all members in the near future. Thanks to Darlington Golf Club for use of the clubhouse and providing the supper.

The annual quiz against the groundsmen was held at Mount Oswald Golf Club before Christmas. We were beaten by just one point this year and a great night was had by everyone. Thanks to Mount Oswald for allowing us to use their facilities and a special thanks to our President, Terry Charlton, and all at Turf Care for organising and running the event. Speaking of quizzes section secretary, Barry Walker, has organised a general knowledge quiz at Darlington Golf Club on February 21 at 7.30pm. The quiz was great fun last year and was won convincingly by a team of three very intelligent people and Ian Pemberton, Kiss the Pope's ring, came second and will be looking to go one better this year. There will be prizes and a Pie and Pea supper so get yourself along. Barry has also provisionally booked Darlington Golf Club for the spring tournament on the 24th April, and anyone interested in playing should contact Barry on 0191 5650691 or 07968 308892.

A news letter will be sent out shortly with more details. Anyone not attending any of the social events can expect a visit from Chairman Tony Smith and his brothers!

A bit of staff movement in the Section recently. Chris Powley has left Dinsdale Spa Golf Club to become First Assistant at Stress Holme Golf Centre and has been replaced by Ian Dunable, from Blackwell Grange Golf Club, who is now First Assistant under Tony Mears. Sean Corroll, Deputy Head at Eaglescliffe Golf Club, has left to demonstrate grinding equipment. Liam McGough has become Greenkeeper/Mechanic at Eaglescliffe. Liam has moved from Richmond Golf Club. Good luck to everyone in their new positions.

Any news contact me on 0771 9193381

Steven Jaques



Midland Region
Peter Larter
Tel: 01476 550115

Midland

Welcome to the New Year everybody, I trust you all had a great festive period.

Looking back to last year's winter tournament which was held at Brocton Golf Club on December 13 the format of the day was Texas Scramble with 12 teams of four competing for the honours. Winners on the day were M. Gilkes, H. Grant, N. Tyler, M. Sanders with a net score of 58.9, closely followed by R. Hayhurst, R. Thomas, C. Lanchbury and Tony Cheese with a net score of 60.4. Our thanks go to Ray Hayhurst and his team for producing an excellent golf course (and blessing us with the weather) and much gratitude to the Captain, and Brocton Hall Golf Club, for allowing us to play their course and the excellent hospitality shown to us throughout the day.

Following the golf, the AGM was held and Alan Kite, our President and Committee Member for the past 35 years, was presented with a gift for his dedication to the Section and industry throughout this time.

Shortly you will all be receiving a fixture card for 2002 detailing the golf and education days. We hope you will continue to support and enjoy the section as in the past I hope you managed to attend BTME and enjoy the opportunities available. I look forward to seeing you all at Gay Hill for the Spring Tournament. Regards.

Phil Gates

Mid Anglia

Our final golf event of the year took place at Dunstable Downs GC in early December. The usual four-man Texas Scramble team format was used and weather conditions were favourable for some low scores. A total of 25 teams entered and the results were as follows:

1. G. Knight, G. Blum, M. Towler, M. Stidwell. 56.5; 2. G. Bruce, A. Grew, S. Proudfoot, N. Reece. 56.6; 3. T. Booth, S. Wooley, C. Sharp, C. Marsh. 56.6. Longest Drive was won by Darren Charlton, of Tilsworth

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GC, and Nearest the Pin by Gerald Bruce, of Berkhamsted GC. Mark Ellis was presented with the Lodgeway Four Ball prize and Adrian Dancer won "Golfer of the Year".

Our thanks to Frank and his team for an excellent course; to Dunstable Downs for allowing us courtesy and to the catering staff for an excellent meal. Our thanks also to Avoncrop, represented by Barry McCloskey, for donating the prizes and to all other trade members for their support. Finally, on a personal note, I would like to wish Dick Coogan, who was due to play in the Christmas tournament, a speedy recovery from a recent mild stroke.

Paul Lockett

East of England

2001 golf season finished off with a Texas Scramble at Boston West Golf Club. A good turn out of members played over a excellently presented course, maintained by Head Greenkeeper Richard Owen and his staff. Thanks to all at Boston West for an enjoyable day.

The day was sponsored by Lawn Mower Services and we were delighted to have Chris Overton, from LMS, to present the prizes. Other trade companies donated many other presents to the prize table.

Richard Owen's team consisting of Peter Fell and S. Boy faired well in the windy conditions to take first prize. Second was Tim Jones, Russ Moody, Adi Kitchener and John

Scotney.

After the presentation of prizes the AGM took place with a new committee being voted in for 2002.

The resignation of John Scotney will be a hard act to follow, as John has been treasurer of the Section since BIGGA was formed. We wish John all the best in his new venture.

The winter seminar took place at Newark GC with John Nicholson and Ken Moodie talking on golf landscaping and architecture.

The Section would like to thank the Golden and Silver Key education fund for allowing us to put on such a good education day. Without the fund we would not have been able to afford the calibre of speaker such as John and Ken.

The fixture cards and seminars are being put together and should be with you soon. Happy New Year to you all.

Graeme Macdonald

East Midlands

This year's Christmas Tournament held at Wollaton Park GC was played on 4th December on a fine dry day. 27 members turned out for the competition, which was a Singles Stb 3/4 H/cap format. Several good scores were returned with the winners in each category as follows:

Category 1. 1 Antony Bindley, Kirby Muxloe, 35pts; 2 Guy Boyd, Greetham Valley, 32pts; 3 Jeff Dickinson, Leen Valley, 32pts

Category 2. 1 Mark Bindley, Kirby

Muxloe, 36pts; 2 Gavin Robson, Lingdale, 27pts; 3 David James, Luffenham Heath, 27pts

Trade & Associate. 1 Russell Latham, Mansfield Sand, 36pts; 2 Simon Hedley, Boughton Loam, 32pts

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Wollaton Park for hosting our event. The course was closed for several months due to Foot & Mouth, but it was still presented in excellent condition by Roger Buchanan and his staff. I would also like to thank the Steward & Stewardess for a great meal and to our very generous sponsors, Rigby Taylor. May I once again remind members that if you wish to attend any Section event your entry

slip and payment must be returned to the Secretary before the closing date.

Antony Bindley



South West and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

Devon & Cornwall

The P. J. Flegg Christmas meeting was held at Okehampton Golf Club on Wednesday, December 12. Members arriving were delighted to find the course frost-free as many had driven through heavy frost before reaching the club. As last year, two

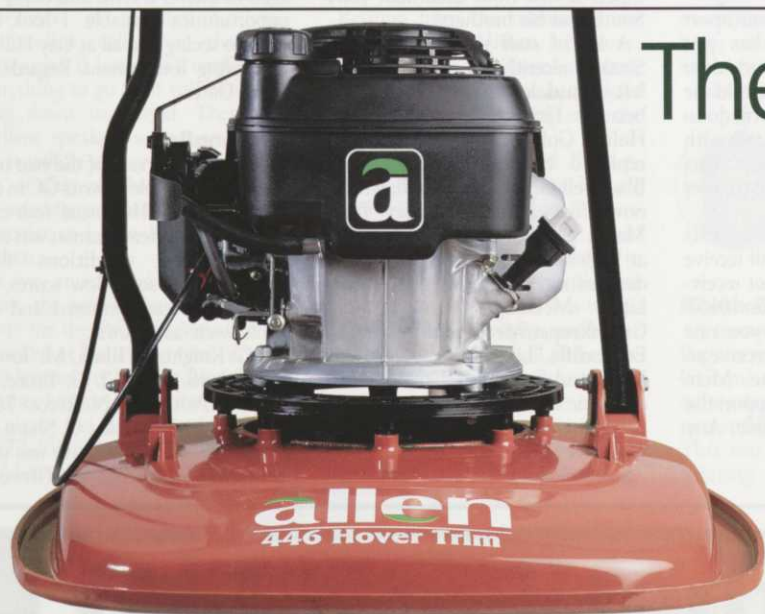
starting points were used for the P. J. Flegg greensome format competition. Our non golfing members were treated, as usual, to the guided course walk by Richard Wisdom. Both golfing and non golfing members were once again delighted to see the now traditional P. J. Flegg refreshment tent by the 6th green, where inside Patrick and his staff treated members to snacks and drinks which set the Christmas atmosphere for the day.

After an excellent Christmas lunch, the day continued with the morning's golf prizes for the P. J. Flegg trophy being presented by Paul Watson to

- 1 G. Tamblin, Mullion, & D. Manley, Mullion. 36pts
- 2 S. Getson, Tavistock, & R. Shapland, China Fleet. 35pts
- 3 R. Parker, Ilfracombe, & T. Clark, Crediton. 35pts

A special prize, donated by Laurence Davis, Deputy Head at Okehampton, for the best effort went to T. Martin & G. Calvert; the President's Prize for Longest Drive on 18th was won by Richard Parker, and the Nearest the Pin on 12th went to Steve Worrall.

The one and only Tank Sherman, back by popular demand, had us all laughing during his after dinner cabaret aided by Des, from P. J. Flegg, who spilled a pint of beer over Alan Dommett. After the afternoon entertainment, our raffles concluded one of the best ever Christmas meetings. The first raffle was for the Avoncrop



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hamper presented by Brian Stevens to Bill Mitchell, while the final raffle of the day consisted of more than 40 prizes donated by members and trade.

The Section would like to thank Okehampton Golf Club and all their staff who made our day so special, with a special mention for Richard Wisdom and his staff who, as always, had the course in great shape.

A big thanks to Patrick Flegg and P. J. Flegg Ltd for sponsoring the day and providing the wonderful snacks and drinks on the course. Also thanks to our President, John Palfrey, who supplied the wine at lunch. Also to all of you who donated prizes for the day.

News Flash: Irrigation workshop, sponsored by Ocmis, will be held at Fingle Glen Golf Club on Tuesday, March 5 for more information please contact me on 01288 353438.

Richard Whyman

South Coast

As I write these notes many of us are finalising our plans for our annual trip to Harrogate and BTME. Those of you who have not made the journey will no doubt have missed a good week and I will report in depth in next month's issue. This month has been fairly quiet with many of us in the south experiencing an unusually very dry and cold spell which has lasted for some time now. Let's hope we don't suffer by having a wet spring.

The section AGM which was held at our Turkey Trot meeting at Barton-on-Sea ran very smoothly and was over in record time. Our Chairman, Tony Gadd, reported to those present that the Section had a very successful year in terms of support for our golf meetings and more importantly we also had a successful financial year. The only area of concern was the disappointing response for educational functions. As greenkeepers we are always busy but we should allow time to continue our professional development by attending lectures and seminars. Next year's AGM will be held at the autumn meeting to fall into BIGGA recommendations, which states that all AGM meetings should be held by the end of October. Your committee for this year is as follows:

Chairman, Tony Gadd; Vice Chairman, Phil Wentworth; Hon Secretary, Fred Deamen; Competition Organiser, Chris Sturgess; Regional Representative, Ian Noble; Around the Green, Alex McCombie; Trade Representative, Trevor Simmonds; Committee Member, Harvey Tribe.

As ever your committee will work hard to make this year as successful as last year. Wednesday, February 13 will see our Section Seminar held at Salisbury and South Wilts Golf Club, which you should all have received details of through the post. As ever there will be a good range of speakers and we hope you will all

take the time and effort to come along to what should be an excellent day.

This year will see the introduction of a new knock-out competition in our Section. The planned pairs event is currently being organised by Phil Wentworth and hopefully will be a great success. Other Sections run similar competitions and have proven to be hugely popular so watch this space for further details.

Lastly, I would just like to say a big thank you to our sponsors who helped make our Section such a success last year. Your continued support is much appreciated!

Until next month.

Alex McCombie

South Wales

The Winter Tournament held at the Pyle & Kenfig Golf Club was a great day out for all. Over 50 took to the links and enjoyed the summer-like conditions which the Secretary had arranged (he arranged everything else). The course was in excellent condition and I'm sure will be enjoyed by those competing over it for the British Amateur Championship 1st round, which is to be played there in June of this year.

Our thanks to Ray Hunt and his staff and our sincere good wishes for the Amateur Championships.

The AGM was a quiet affair for a change and main points arising were:

President, Colin Murphy, to stand down at next year's AGM after serving for over 30 years. Julian Bartlett-Jones elected Chairman and Angus Macleod elected Vice Chairman. Dismay at the cancellation/loss of Westurf. Change of golf competition format to Stableford for all competitions. Fixtures agreed and fixture cards have been ordered.

Members, remember to send your passport size photos to HQ with membership renewals.

Evening lectures finalised and are: Jan 16 - David Bates of Sportsworld;

Feb 13 - Stuart Ashworth of Amtec; Mar 13 - John Lindup, of Saama International; Apr 10 - BIGGA versus IOG Quiz/Social evening.

Our sincere thanks to all at the Pyle & Kenfig for making us so welcome. To Captain David Wooding, for his hospitality, and to WGU Vice President, Brian Andrews, for joining us for the day. The Christmas dinner was, as always, excellent and Jan and her staff feed us heartily year after year. The day was, as is traditional, sponsored by Vitax Ltd and their local distributor Celtic Mowers and we are indebted to Adrian Masters and Kim Davies for their continued support and sponsorship. Long may it continue.

Results of the day are: 1. winning the Vitax Shield - Emyr Nickels, of Inco GC; 2. Herbie Probert, of Pontardawe GC; 3. Daryl Bray, of Morriston GC.

Longest Drive went to Ian Marx,

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45°

of Carmarthen GC, and Nearest the Pins went to Adrian Panks, of Llanwrn GC, and Russell Anderson, of Cardiff GC.
Peter Lacey



South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

South West

Here is a list of the Section committee members and their phone numbers, don't be afraid to call on any subject.

Chairman: C. Sealey, 01249 462027
Vice Chair: J. Braithwaite 01275 874002
Fixtures Secretary: K. James, 01934 627413, D. Bougen 01285 720112
Team Captain: A. Knight, 01225 760684
Handicaps Sec: J. Keenaghan, 01454 616837
Education: G. Woods, 01225 333928;
National Board: P. Jenkins, 01242 674328

The Section is holding an informal evening talk, on February 12, at Sham Castle Golf Club.

The talk will be on Organic Fertilisers and The Illegal Use of Pesticides, and it will be given by Simon Barnaby, of the Scotts Company. Simon is an agronomist with the Scotts Company. Martin Townsend will also be present. It should be an interesting evening, so please come along.

Our next golf event is at North Wiltshire Golf Club on February 27. It's our winter tournament. Our events need your support.

If you are going to Harrogate have a great time and make sure you know where the hotel is.

Kevin James

Kent

A fair bit to report on this month with the turkey trot and the AGM in

December and the election of new committee members. I'll start with the golf news and a big thank you to all who made the effort to play at Royal Darenth Valley on December 6. I think it was one of the best turnouts for ages with 43 taking part. So someone must be reading this column and taking notice. The weather was superb with some people even playing in short sleeved shirts, it was that warm. It was a little wet under foot but Nigel and his team had made an effort for us and shaved the greens and the temps for some tricky putts and chips, which were best carried all the way to the pins.

A nice touch was the ball washing facility in each hole cup, a little more cleaning fluid maybe, Nigel. I think everyone had a good time even if their scores didn't reflect the smiles on their faces and laughs from around the course. It was nice to see a woman Greenkeeper playing in the form of Sarah Mardon. Hope we will see you next time and haven't put you off coming. Also a big thank you to our Prince Harry look alike Jamie Wright, from The London Club, for the roy-

al seal of approval - hence Royal Darenth Valley.

Onto the prize winners and yet again Duncan Kelso won with a great score of 41 pts off a 6 Handicap which I think should be lowered. Duncan won the Scott's Shield and a big thank you for their continued support. The runner up was Gary Debehm with 40 points, another dodgy handicap there. Trade winner was Derek Keen who has now left his job at John Shaws to get back into the golf industry. Best of luck Derek in your new job. Your visits around the region will be missed.

Thanks to all the staff at Darenth Valley for looking after us for the day and clearing up the mess made by some people after dinner. Enough said about that. Onto the AGM which was, mercifully, brief. Gary Debenham has stepped down from Section Secretary and massive thanks for all his efforts on behalf of the Section. In his place Duncan Kelso has stepped into the breach and best of luck to you Duncan for your years in office. Also a welcome to Jason Moody, from Canterbury GC, who takes up a position on the committee.

Thank you to Chris Sharpe, of Rigby Taylor, who brought up a point I made a couple of months ago about reps not making appointments with Head

Greenkeepers. Chris pointed out that, like himself, many reps do make appointments only for the

Greenkeeper not to keep it. So it works both ways so please keep to your appointments or make a call if you can.

I did hear from our Chairman Barry Jackson, from Broke Hill, where they had their water fountain stolen at the end of last year. So, if anyone has been offered a fountain for about £4000 let me know, it will be too big for your ponds. Congratulations to Tim Maynard on his engagement to his long time love, Donna Young. Best of luck, Donna, you will need it. Any other news please let me know your views and feelings on any matter. Contact details as always jbatkhgolf@aol.com or 01732 875020. Look forward to hearing from you.

Jason Bean.

East Anglia

At last I hear you cry!

Communications were not what they should have been last year. Someone kept shooting the pigeon!

In the deep midwinter, December 18 to be precise, our motley mob descended on Thorpeness for the annual bun fight and AGM. All went like clockwork as per... thanks to Ian and Steve. The golf wasn't bad either - teams of three in a Texas scramble. Results: Mike Virley, S. Bartram and W. King, 61; Mike Moss, I Wright and P Swain, 62.8 and Roger Plummer, S Plummer (uncle) and R. Whiting, 63.2. Nearest the Pin 2nd. Nick Ashman; 7th, Alan Elliott; 10th R. Whiting and 16th

Your greens' quality is riding on it.



Mike Virley. Longest Drive. 4th A. Sutcliffe, 18th I. Wright.

It was great to see Toddy Huddleston again and sad not to see Ernie Hart who we understand has not been too sharp but is on the mend. Get well soon mate.

Our thanks as usual must go to Thorpeness Golf Club, especially Robin Baker (he's my mate after that speech), the Club Captain. We must never forget our trade members who support us so generously over the years. They are Bartram Mowers; C.M.W; Rigby Taylor; Rushbrooks; Sisis; Aventis; Ben Burgess; Consultant Clarkson Nicholsons; Toro; Prime Irrigation; Collier Turfcare; Tacit; Greenkeeping Supply Company and Turf Care. Anyone else who has supported us, who is not listed, let me know I'll include you in the next list.

As we missed several reports last year this is where we went. April, Felixstowe Ferry with the rain, George worked hard but could not stop it, otherwise a good day and thanks to Mr Scuser for presenting the prizes.

Then there was Purdis Heath in October. A lovely course well presented by Norman and his staff.

All prizes were presented by Allan Busser, the Captain.

Our thanks once again to all the clubs that put up with us last year and I'm sorry that reports did not reach print. Hope to see you all in the spring.

Mick Lathrope



Northern Ireland

Our AGM was held at Rockmount Golf Club, Carry Duff on November 29. Before commencing the meeting, Secretary Allison Sloan had organised a quiz. Many of the questions, especially those on Roman Numerals proved too difficult for the majority of us.

The team of Terry Crawford, Michael O'Neill and Emmett Curran came out on top with a three point winning margin.

The following committee will represent the section in 2002. Chairman, Jonathan McCabe; Secretary, Allison Sloan; Treasurer, Michael O'Neill; Magazine Officer, Kenneth Henderson; Education Officer, Andrew Kerr, and Match & Handicap Secretary, Terry Crawford.

Many thanks to Rockmount Golf Club for letting the Section hold our AGM in their clubhouse.

I would like to remind members that the Section is organising another autumn seminar in 2002 which will be held on November 6, the venue being Massereene Golf Club, Antrim. An interesting list of speakers is presently being formulated so I will keep everyone informed on fur-

ther developments in the months ahead. At present our golf days are being finalised for the year, The Secretary will be sending out a letter soon confirming dates and venues.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate Chairman, Jonathan McCabe on being appointed Head Greenkeeper at Carnalea Golf Club, Bangor. Jonathan is moving from Malone Golf Club to take up his new position at Carnalea in February. Our best wishes go to him.

Well, that's about all my news for this month. I wish everyone a belated Happy New Year and wish you all good Greenkeeping in 2002.

Ken Henderson

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DETAILS ON PAGE 51

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TORO

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Trees and woodland often form an important component of the golf course landscape, and here consultant Antony Strawson outlines their benefits and management implications

PLAN for success

Trees can improve the playing aspects of the game, providing three-dimensional obstacles, back drops to greens and show direction of holes and generally create an attractive playing environment. They provide shelter and security for members and visitors (not to mention the grounds staff themselves) and also provide important habitats for a wide range of plant and animal species often within very urbanised areas. If managed correctly, trees can enhance the visual appeal and the aesthetics of the course while providing a multitude of different benefits.

But while extolling the virtues of the humble tree, one must also consider some of their less attractive qualities. With their prolific rooting, trees are often the culprits of blocked drains. They can cast shade onto tees and greens, stealing important moisture and nutrients, leaving only fallen branches and dense carpets of leaves in return. They can encroach onto the fairway, reducing the playing area to the detriment of all. Trees are in effect seen by many as three-dimensional liabilities.

Below: New tree planting showing the weed free spot around each tree



But through careful management, trees and woodlands can provide these multi benefits with minimum disruption to the game itself. The cornerstone of successful management is the formulation of a comprehensive and detailed management plan which is practical and guides the course managers on how to manage their tree resource over a long period of time. This is very important as managers and committees change.

The Plan

The plan should be produced with the help of specialist advice. There is always temptation, especially when finances are limited, to avoid what is often seen as unnecessary expenditure. However the investment in expert advice from the outset can prevent costly mistakes and ensure the club's objectives are met.

A consultant can help lead the club through the minefield of grant applications and timber sales, securing additional income wherever possible. The provision of unbiased advice can often help the management committee make important and often difficult decisions regarding the long-term management of the trees. Consultants can also add weight to planning applications and help smooth the ruffled feathers of unhappy neighbours.

The formulation of a management plan primarily involves a thorough examination of all the trees and woodland on the course. Each individual tree and woodland block should be examined and information on species, age, condition and location recorded. The tree resource should then be evaluated in terms of its capacity to meet the long-term objectives of the club. It should seek to provide overall management advice and pre-

scriptions, for all trees and woodland areas, both existing and proposed.

In summary, management plans should:

- Involve a degree of professional input
- Set out the long term vision for the tree resource, both existing and proposed
- Contain guidance for the design of new planting
- Involve both the long term management aims and short term work programme
- Be comprehensive, practical and achievable
- Prioritise management
- Seek to maximise potential income from grants and timber sales
- Manage expenditure, utilising existing resources

Existing Trees

However where resources and funds are limited, the plan should seek to prioritise projects. The treatment of dead, dying or dangerous trees, where people are at risk, should be seen as of paramount importance. In the increasingly litigious world, a proactive approach to risk management and reduction can never be overstated.

Management prescriptions should seek the avoidance of large scale, high impact operations. The temptation to instantly 'fix' areas of concern should be avoided, and replaced with a desire for gradual improvement through evolution, maintaining the continuity of the golf course environment essential for the enjoyment of the members.

Attention should be focussed on key features within the playing landscape. Trees and copses of strategic value to the hole, as well as those of general aesthetic importance should be identified. A detailed assessment of their health and condition will often provide the necessary impetus



to begin thinking of ways in which the lives of such trees can be extended and replaced over time. As this process takes time, replacements have to be considered well in advance.

Under certain circumstances, the removal of unsuitable species, dangerous or badly damaged trees or trees encroaching into the field of play may be necessary. As the felling of trees is often a very emotive issue with members and committees, the opinions of those who will be affected need to be canvassed. A detailed plan provides an independent way forward.

New Planting

Where areas have been identified as suitable for the planting of new trees and shrubs, either to maintain important features, extend woodland or make better use of dead ground, careful attention should be paid to design and layout of the scheme. Tree planting designs should always seek to improve the natural beauty of the landscape, linking sin-



Above: The beauty of trees especially in the autumn

Below: A dogwood with its lovely red twigs provides welcome colour on the course in winter

gle trees and scattered areas of existing planting with natural curves and lines. Designs should mimic nature, forming the landscape into a more natural appearance.

The choice of species should reflect not just the objectives of the club. Species chosen should be suited to the site itself: the soil, climate, and aspect. Choice should also reflect resilience to damage both from players and golf ball damage and suitability within the landscape and the playing environment. Where nature conservation is important, trees which have been grown from locally produced seeds should be sourced. The use of mixtures of indigenous species will improve the naturalness of any planting scheme and if planted at a density of 1100 stems/ha or greater, will provide an immediate 'wooded effect', and could qualify for the payment of grant aid. However, individually planted specimen trees are required to replace those lovely single parkland trees often found on parkland and

designed landscape courses.

The size of plants chosen will be crucial. Experience has shown small bare rooted transplants between 60-90cm in height are more suitable to planting than large standards over 2m. Not only are these trees significantly cheaper to buy, plant and protect, but they also tend to suffer less mortality than their more expensive cousins. In addition, as the proportion of roots to shoots are more balanced, are more suitable to planting and offer significantly higher growth rates, often exceeding the height of the standard within a few years.

Each tree will require protection from mechanical, mammal and herbicide damage and often individual tree guards are appropriate on the golf course. The choice of shelter type is extremely varied with a multitude of different types and prices. The choice of guard should reflect the type of damage anticipated. As a general rule of thumb, tubes provide a better growing environment, are stronger

but more expensive and intrusive than spirals. A low level wooden frame is an excellent method of protecting specimen trees from lawn mower damage and we have used these to great effect at Dalmahoy.

Care and Attention

Of equal, if not greater importance is the aftercare of the newly planted trees. Within the plan, allowance should be made for their care for at least the first ten years after planting. Chemical weeding to remove weed competition from the base of each tree will be essential for at least the first three seasons, improving growth and reducing mortality considerably. However the benefit of a weed-free spot around each tree helps to keep both lawnmowers and golfers away from the trees and damage reduction. The control of weeds may need to be extended to where thistles, ragwort or other noxious weeds may begin to develop. This can be achieved through annual mowing or the application of a suitable herbi-





Above: In larger woodlands timber production provides some income

Left: Trees do grow old and, if not a risk, deadwood provides good roosting perches and is of high conservation value

Below: A recently thinned stand of beech

cide. The replacement of natural failures at the end of the first and second years will be required especially if the trees were planted under a grant scheme. Other operations will include the periodic maintenance of the tree guards to ensure they remain effective and are not restricting growth, the removal of bamboo canes where spiral guards have been used and pruning. Pruning young trees is an absolutely essential operation especially during the first few years because it is during this time that

these forks encourages trees to grow straight, because if left unchecked, could create mechanical weaknesses leading trees to split apart when they get older. Side branch pruning allows easy access into woodlands but you have to be careful not to turn every tree on the course into an unsightly 'lollypop' shaped tree.

Woodland Areas

Many courses are often bordered by or possess areas of existing woodland and mature trees. As they are often



located away from the fairways and if not directly affecting play, often receive little direct management, save for the periodic trimming of their edges and removal of fallen limbs from the fairway. These trees have often been around for centuries but such woods are often of key importance to the wider landscape, sheltering the course from the outside world, creating that essential feeling of escapism for the golfer.

By not managing your woodlands, you not only reduce the range of benefits which the trees can provide, but also run the risk of not ensuring landscape continuity. One only has to look back to the great storm of 1987 and Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970's to realise the risks of having stands of mature and single species trees, while we are unable to predict or avoid such devastating occurrences, their effects can be reduced by careful planning.

The creation of an uneven aged woodland, containing a diverse mix of species will be the key to longevity and resilience to factors outside the control of the course manager. Such a woodland will also be more beneficial to wildlife.

To create such a stand of trees, there is a range of management tools available to the manager. Thinning is the removal of the smaller, weaker, suppressed trees or unwanted species within a stand, leaving those of better form and greater stability to grow on to maturity. While removing around 20% of the trees, the actual

area of woodland is never reduced, as the remaining trees will eventually fill the spaces. What was once dense scrub can be transformed into an attractive managed woodland, for the benefit of the retained stand of trees. Selective felling is the removal of single trees or small groups, creating areas for replanting, natural regeneration or to allow existing, younger trees to develop.

The management of existing woodland does not necessarily involve large scale expensive remedial operations. Often the most appropriate method of management involves small scale, but regular work to achieve the objectives over a long period of time thus minimising disruption to both players and wildlife.

The management of trees is often secondary to the management of the greens, tees and fairways, as indeed it should be. After all, how often have you heard it said that: 'A game of golf spoils a nice walk in the woods!' But that said, trees usually play a crucial role on the course, and need to be maintained accordingly. A management plan will form the basis for the long-term maintenance and enhancement the golf course landscape. In an increasingly competitive industry, the beauty and quality of the course will become ever more important in retaining and attracting new members. Are your trees up to the task?

Antony Strawson is a Consultant with Eamonn Wall & Co the specialist golf course, tree planting and woodland management firm and is based at their English office in Retford. He can be contacted on 01777 7029390. www.eamonnwall.co.uk

Pruning Young Trees – this new leaflet just published by Eamonn Wall & Co is available free of charge by calling 01259 743212