

2

Has the removal of any particular chemical product from circulation made a real difference to your ability to maintain your course?

I use very few chemical products, concentrating instead on aeration, spiking and feeding. I use chemicals as a last resort to control disease.

A long term worm killer. I understand the reasons for banning such as chlordane, the best of the lot, but nothing has replaced it. I use carbendazin, but this isn't as good.

No change. We began to practice cultural ideas such as aeration and scarifying about five years ago but use a fungicide for fusarium once a year.

Not really. I used to have Touchdown LA and I have replaced that with Roundup which does the same job.

Something to replace chlordane. We have had nothing anywhere near as effective since then. We have a bad worm problem and a product as good as chlordane would be a major help.

Without a doubt chlordane, which so far as I am concerned was the only product to control worms effectively.

3

What product are you waiting for someone to develop, and why?

I would like to see one developed to suppress grass growth. There are chemicals about but they can be improved on. One to control poa annua would be welcome.

I am sympathetic to environmental products, so a microbial product would be useful. I have used this sort of thing for three to four years with some success. It improves tolerance to disease and stimulates plants in their natural defensive mechanism.

A worm suppressant. Nothing has replaced chlordane which we used once every three years before it was banned. Now we really need to spray once every six months.

A fungicide to control Take All on greens. I understand there is a product called Heritage which is being used in the United States and should arrive here in the spring.

We need something which will deal effectively with fusarium by one application a year. At the moment I am spraying two or three times.

A chemical to deal with fusarium on a once a year basis, plus the problem dealt with in the previous question.

4

What do you think the future would hold if all chemical applications were banned from golf courses?

I would love to see the day when they are banned as long as the course doesn't suffer... and as long as we don't get more hassle.

We have to modify our management regime and become more reliant on cultural products, correcting the cause rather than treating the symptoms.

The golf course would become very costly in terms of maintenance with more brushing, spiking and aeration.

It might be very difficult with some diseases. We may have to use more organic ideas and fertilisers to try to prevent disease coming.

A total collapse of the game of golf. We would have greens covered in disease and it would take all summer to get things back to normal. Worms, leather jackets and weeds would be a huge problem and it would be very labour intensive.

I suspect it would be utter chaos and it would make the greenkeeper's job very tough to say the least. The courses would suffer, it would be much more work intensive and we would obviously, need more greenkeepers.

5

Have you changed your maintenance regime in anticipation of it possibly becoming a reality?

I already practice in anticipation of the eventual banning of chemicals, which I think will come, as it has already in Germany for example.

I am more observant towards the possible future banning of chemicals and avoid using an excess of nitrogen. I also keep a careful check on possible over-watering.

Yes. Our machinery is a lot bigger now in anticipation of having to do more aeration and spiking. We began this programme four to five years ago.

We haven't changed very much at all. We aerate a lot as we have USGA greens. As for chemicals being banned, some people will say it will come and others not.

Not at the moment. I just hope it will never happen. If I see any proof that it will, then I might change a few things.

No. We brush the greens every morning to keep them as dry as possible. We verticut a lot and also cut back the trees to provide as much air round the greens in a bid to prevent disease.



SCOTTISH REGION
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440

On Tuesday 4 March 2003 BIGGA Scottish Region present their Annual Conference at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline. From a cross section of the fine turf industry we have attracted speakers from throughout the UK.

Speakers include Andy Campbell, Estates & Course Manager, Carden Park, on "Facing Change," Gordon Moir, Links Superintendent, St. Andrews Links Trust, the title of his talk will be "Fulfilling peoples expectations at the home of golf", Steve Isaac, STRI Scotland, on "Turf culture in New Zealand, half a world away, but so close to home." From Turftrax we have Dr Richard Earl and the title of his talk is "Optimising Golf Course Drainage Designs." We also have Mark Gordon, of Eamonn Wall & Co, Woodland Design & Management Conservation & Arboriculture, plus the Managing Director of Golf Finance, Ian Henderson and finally Tim Earley, of Waste2Water Europe Ltd. The Conference has always been well supported and with first class facilities on offer and easy access to the Conference Centre it is an ideal location.

Application forms will be available in the early part of January 2003 and will be posted to all members within the Scottish Region. Ticket price is £28, which includes morning coffee/tea and lunch.

Peter J. Boyd

North

No new members to report this month, a quiet time of year perhaps?

On a sadder note, I am sure every member of our section wishes Ross Macrae and his family a speedy and complete recovery from their recent and well publicised illness. Ross, who is Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Oldmeldrum GC, must have experienced every parents nightmare when it happened, so fingers crossed, a full recovery will be made.

The new Head Greenkeeper at Oldmeldrum is Richard Mullins, formerly of Swanston GC. A start you could have done without Richard.

The seminar at Nairn GC went down well, with a fair turn out of greenkeepers as well as club representatives. The topic discussed was the effect the changes in climate will have on the maintenance of our golf courses. The speakers were Jonathan Smith, from Scottish Wildlife; Steve Issac, from STRI, and Kevin Weir, from the SGU.

The winters are certainly becoming wetter, and creating more problems for the drainage systems on our courses, and the summers are due to become drier. The rain storms are, when they occur, so heavy they are leaving behind a lot of damaged paths and areas around the course, which then need attention to tidy up, and therefore putting more pressure on the workforce. The inland courses are the worst affected by these conditions, and several courses will have to change their maintenance programs in order to deal with these conditions. There are courses in our Section which have had many days of closure over the last few seasons due to extreme weather, and this is a valuable loss of revenue they could well do without. Every course's aim is to try and stay open as many days as is possible in the year, so this particular seminar was very relevant to what the greenkeeper faces on a daily basis.

Harrogate is on later this month and I am sure it will be as big a success this year as it is every year. The attendances keep going up every year, which is a credit to all who organise the week and keep the interest going. Anyone going down I am sure will have a good time.

The outings have yet to be finalised for this year, but we should have confirmation shortly.

Well, I hope everyone's New Year went well and all our members have a successful 2003 and may your courses stay open and dry.

Iain Gunn

East

Happy New Year to you all and we hope you all had a great time over the festive period and Santa was good to you.

Well welcome to the first column of the year, or you may call it the Chairman's newsletter. The Section held its annual dinner dance at the Kilspindie House Hotel on November 30 and it was, yet again, a great night and thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance. It was good to see some of our trade members in the company enjoying themselves and also a pleasure to have our Scottish Chairman, Archie Dunn, and his wife Karen, with us on the evening. They both enjoyed themselves and we look forward to having them along with us again this year. A big thank you to all the members and our friends in the trade who brought along raffle prizes. Also a big thanks to the patrons who do so much for the Section every year because if it wasn't for you we wouldn't be able to stage some of the events throughout the season, so all the best for the next 12 months to you all. So, back to the dance. We will be holding it again this year and the committee will be sitting down soon

to see if there needs to be any changes etc to the format so if you have any ideas let me know as soon as possible. During the dance we presented Ian Aitchison (Duns Golf Club) with a crystal decanter and glasses and flowers for his wife in recognition of his retirement as Head Greenkeeper at Duns after 10 years service to the club. Ian retires in mid December and we would like to wish him all the best in his retirement and we hope to see you at all section events in the coming months.

So, all the best Ian from all of your friends in the section and in the trade. Also thanks to Archie Dunn for making the presentation to Ian. Congratulations to the winners of the patrons awards this year, they are Graham Davidson, Glencorse GC, and Gary Rodger, Kingsknowe GC. Well done to you both and we hope you enjoy your time at BTME Harrogate 2003 where you will be going as ambassadors of the Section. So, on your return, I will be looking for a small article about your time at BTME which will be printed in a future edition of Greenkeeper International.

A big thank you to the patrons of the Scottish Region for providing these awards which are very much appreciated by all the lucky winners. Details coming up next month BTME report, outing details, social events and any other Section news.

If you are going on the annual pilgrimage to Harrogate I'll see you there. If not I will be back in this column once again next month.

Chris Yeaman

Ayrshire

Happy New Year to everyone, hopefully you've all enjoyed a Merry Christmas season and are looking forward to getting back to your winter programmes.

Scotsturf seems to have been well received once again with the milder weather also helping.

Being a bit quiet this time of year I'll just close by wishing those travelling to Harrogate this month a safe and pleasurable trip, mine's a pint of best bitter if you can see me. Cheers!

Denis Tweddell

Central

I hope everyone has recovered from the festive period and are settled back into work for the coming season. Hopefully it will be drier than last year but at the time of writing the rain is still pouring down with more forecast for the coming weeks. Never mind, it doesn't matter if it rains at Harrogate.

Trophies! Would all members who have golf trophies in their possession, please arrange to

have them returned to me as soon as possible in order that I can have the engraving brought up to date before the spring tournament. While I am on about golf tournaments this year the spring tournament will be held by courtesy of St Andrews Bay Golf and Spa Resort with the autumn tournament being held by courtesy of Alloa Golf Club, both dates have yet to be finalised. We are looking for venues for future tournaments so if you fancy hosting one at your course please get in touch.

At the moment only 58 members have sold their allocation of Club 2000 tickets, two members returned theirs unsold leaving a total of 225 members still in possession of tickets, names and numbers in February's news! I know I keep going on about the lack of support for the Section's only fund raiser but surely it doesn't take much to buy/sell your allocation of tickets (2) or if you can't be bothered or don't believe in that sort of thing, please just stick them in an envelope and send them back then we will know whether they have been sold or not. It's the same few stalwarts who support all Section events when in fact the Section is there for the benefit of everyone.

John Crawford

NORTHERN REGION

Sheffield

On November 25 the Sheffield Section visited Rotherham Golf Club to compete in our Christmas golf tournament. Luckily for all our competitors the mist and fog that was lingering started to clear so that it was more pleasant for a good game of golf.

As always Rotherham Golf Club was at its usual high standard for the time of year and special thanks goes to Rotherham Golf Club for giving us courtesy of the course and to David Chappell and his team for presenting the course to such a high standard.

The results for the competition are as follows: 1. A. Sampson, 30pts; 2. R. Needham, 28pts; 3. R. Tyson, 26pts; 4. J. Lax, 24pts; 5. M. Crawshaw, 24pts; Best Trade. D. Smith, 25pts.

On behalf of the Sheffield Section I would also like to thank our main sponsors for the day, Rigby Taylor for donating all the wonderful prizes for our prize table. I would also like to thank all the other trade members for their support in donating prizes not just for the day but throughout the year.

PS. Remember if you have any useful or important news please let me know via e-mail on chris.astle1@btopenworld.com or by telephone on 07752883290.

See you all soon.

Chris Astle

North Wales

Happy New Year, hope you all had a good one and maybe over did the Christmas cheer, well it is allowed. Just to give yourself a three week break before it starts all over again in Jimmy's oops I mean Harrogate. Yes it's time to re-train for a week of frivolity letting your hair down without the other half and perhaps saying a few things you regret for the rest of the year to your fellow counterparts. But don't worry because they will be doing the same thing as well.

The BTME seems to go from strength to strength, now plus the ClubHouse exhibition, it may take you a week to walk around it.

Back to Section business. Our North Wales Christmas competition was held at Caldycott GC and, with its new high-tech drainage system in full flow, the day turned out dry and sunny.

With a field of 65 playing the winners were as follows: Members 1. Danny O'Neil, 36pts; 2. Jez Hughes, 36pts; 3. Andy Peel, 36pts; Guest. Phil Bailey, 34pts and Under 21 Also went to Danny O'Neil. Trevor Johnson collected Nearest the Pin and the Aggregate Trophy went to Andy Peel. Trade was Terry Adamson 33pts on a card play off.

Many thanks to Caldycott for their hospitality; to Ian Farrel and the lads for the fine presentation of the course and to the catering staff for the excellent Christmas meal and to the trade sponsors ALS, Acorn (UK), Alpha, Am-Tech, Walker Eng and Gem.

The AGM took place and out of our 186 strong membership a turn out of 20 attended including the committee who were re-elected en-block with Steve Roberts standing down and the addition of Wendy O'Brien elected on.

The Cornes, Adamson skin's game was back to all square after an Adamson defeat at Caldycott. The decider will now take place in February in Atlanta Georgia at the Harbour Town Links GC. For those of you wishing to come along there is still time to book a flight and while you are there you could also visit the GCSAA Atlanta show in the conference centre 13th 14th 15th Feb. On a par with Harrogate, the show boasts worldwide exhibitors and a full seminar and lecture programme. A meeting point for all North Wales members will be on booth 4387 in Hall B5, hope to see you there.

A couple of extra thank you's go to Am-tech who are once again sponsoring the coach to BTME on Jan 21 and to ALS who have again sponsored the programme of events for the 2003 season and finally congratulations to Jez Hughes for getting through the selection programme for the Bernards / Bigga trip to Atlanta.

Any views, news or information, please contact me on: Home 01925 263394
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e-mail acorn@golf@supanet.com

Mesen Cymru

Andrew Acorn

North West

I was sad to hear this week of the death of one of the Section's retired members, Jack Rhodes. Jack worked at Bolton Lostock Golf Club for 27 years, starting in 1958 until his retirement in 1985. His wife, Nellie, told me he had been ill for some time, but always enjoyed reading his magazine. Our thoughts are with Nellie, and daughter, Christine.

Thursday, December 5 was the date for the AGM and to play for the President's Cup at Wilmslow Golf Club. Steve Oultram and I were a little anxious about the weather as we had plenty of rain during that week, but we had no need to worry, after an early frost the sun shone all day, making it a great success. The course was as usual in superb condition for the time of year, and all credit must go to Steve and his staff. It was interesting that during our round of golf we were able to see how much winter work is going on, especially with the ponds on the course. Steve appears to be specialising in turning dirty overgrown pits into very respectable ponds, which not only look pleasant but also act as a drainage point. Well done Steve, I feel sure you will win the environment award eventually.

The winner of the President's Cup was Paul Pearse, playing off scratch, with 32 points. The Longest Drive winner was Steve Johnson. The Nearest the Pin winner was Michael Davie.

Both the Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin prizes were donated by Rufford Soil Technology. Everybody brought a bottle for a prize, so we all took a prize home.

The AGM was short and sweet with everybody apparently happy with the way the Section is being run. The committee were voted on for a further year, with two more members joining the committee. The North West Committee are: Chairman. Mike Davie; Secretary. Bert Cross; Treasurer. Bill Merritt; Vice Chairman. Paul Eddlestone.

Chris Sheehan, Steve Oultram, Adrian Holt,

Paul Walker, Clive Poole.

The day was completed with a fantastic meal provided by the caterers, Roger Waring and Christine Cunningham. Our thanks to them.

I will close with a reminder that the "Mere Seminar" is on March 18. With some interesting speakers in attendance. So come and support the seminar, and bring your Secretary and Greens Chairman along also.

Any news or views ring me on 01517 245412 or on mobile 07761 583387 Bert Cross

Northern

Hope you're all moving freely after your over indulgence this Christmas and you have all survived the party season!

What a ball all the competitors had at Crosland Heath Golf Club, which was the venue for the section's Christmas golf day. A truly fantastic course was played in magnificent condition for early December, a great testament to Phil Haigh and his greens team. The caterers and bar staff looked after all the boys' needs as most over indulged in both food and drink. Sponsorship of the day was from The Greenkeeping Supply Company, thanks to Liam and Rick for their support. Special thanks to Farmura for sponsoring the coach that took us and brought us home after a night out in Huddersfield. The competition was a four-man team event with every team receiving a prize. The winning team consisted of Ian Pullan, Andy Clark, Richard Harris and myself. If all the above was not enough for everyone an impromptu golf competition through Shipley was played to finish the night off by some!

All golf events in 2003 will be at the new price of £16. You will still get a bacon sandwich and coffee on arrival and a three course meal after your round. I will publish a cut off date for each event in these notes, please could you ensure I receive your payment by this date. So if you did not play in any of the golf events last year you really are missing out. Why not make it your New Year's resolution to join in the fun this year?

The Annual Dinner dance is taking place at Otley Golf club on March 1. Full details will be available soon, so put it in your diaries and why not treat your loved ones to a night out with some of your colleagues.

Congratulations to Telford Jarvis and his wife on the birth of their son, Roman. I have also heard on the grapevine that Martin Heggie is to get spliced this year!

The Textron trip I mentioned last year will be taking place on February 25 and 26 so if

anyone is interested please get in touch, as places are limited.

I look forward to bumping into everyone at BTME and hope you all have a great week.

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Dave Thackray



MIDLAND REGION
Peter Larter
Tel: 01476 550115

Mid Anglia

I hope everybody has had a good Christmas and New Year and looking forward to what the rest of the winter has in store.

The Christmas Meeting was held at South Beds Golf Club on December 6 with 88 members playing a Texas Scramble sponsored by Avoncrop Amenity. The weather was very kind to us with clear blue skies and the course in excellent condition. The results were as follows:- 1. B. Allonby, R. Jackson, J. Hartley and C. Asprey; 2. G. Bruce, A. Grew, S. Proudfoot and N. Rees; 3. G. Simkin, S. Mason, R. Bufroy and S. Moss.

Winner of Nearest the Pin was M. Towler and the Longest Drive was J. Hartley.

Our thanks go to South Beds for their warm welcome, the Christmas dinner was of the highest order and Paul Lockett and his staff must be congratulated on the condition of the course. After the presentation of the prizes a presentation was made to Paul Lockett who, at the AGM in October, stepped down from the Committee after 14 years and our thanks go to him for all his time and effort serving the Section. Congratulations also to Steve Mason who was presented with the Golfer of the Year Trophy.

Looking towards the coming months we are hoping to organise a course visit to The Grove, on the outskirts of Watford in February or March. On March 4/5 the Section is running a Further Computer Skills course at Berkhamsted Golf Club. It is restricted to six people and anyone interested should contact me on 01442 877345. Fixture lists will be with you shortly with our first golf event being played at The Bedfordshire Golf Club on May 16.

Gerald Bruce

BB&O

How quick another year rolls by, marching to the golfers tune of Why? Why? Why? There will be no change in that direction but hopefully you have all feasted well and pickled parts of the body only alcohol has a right to do. Unfortunately I have to start with bad news. An excellent greenkeeper called Mike Holland passed away in November, leaving a big hole in the lives of all who knew him. He had a passion for greenkeeping having left Turnberry GC many years back to be the right hand man to Gordon Irvine at Mill Ride GC. On behalf of the Section may I pass on our condolences to Mike's family, friends, Gordon and his team. I would next like to wish Robert Woodward all the best in his move to the Lake District having put in a sterling effort helping to raise the profile of the Berkshire college.

May I also wish the very best in future endeavours for Ray Clark, at Harleyford GC, and David Gower, at the Oxfordshire GC. Both businesses have recently changed hands and I know from experience it can be a tough time getting to grips with a new regime.

Unfortunately the Turkey Trot event at Southfields GC was a complete washout. Most players showed up and made the most of socialising with friends as we waited in vain for the rain to stop. This event was not rescheduled due to the close proximity of Christmas but the club would like to see us back so we will look at this in the future. Two events in 2002 were washouts so I would like to think we will have better luck in 2003. May I thank all those who turned up and urge you to hang in there for the better days to come.

I attended the Midland Regional Seminar in November and had a most enjoyable time. There was a good range of speakers with Peter McEvoy giving delegates plenty to think about with regards to the future of golf equipment, course conditions and the athleticism of young golfers. We are all in for more challenging times as the boundaries of what can be achieved get pushed further from what we have now. I was lucky enough to attend the inaugural National Turfgrass Foundation in Southport. This was aimed squarely at research and what it is doing for us greenkeepers. I would urge you join this fine organisation and receive the newsletters that will contain many articles from eminent professors in the various fields of research. The dates and venues for this year have now been finalised and go as follows: - May 28, spring tournament, Magnolia Park GC; July

1, summer tournament, Donnington Valley GC; August 11, autumn invitational Tournament, Buckinghamshire GC; November 20, Winter Turkey Trot, Frilford Heath GC.

You will be receiving a fixture card in February so please place this somewhere visible and plan to join us for some good olde fashioned fun. We have considered the idea of putting together an educational evening for our section next winter. We will only do this if there is a desire for this to happen amongst the members. I would like to hear from you about what topics would interest you and what speakers would get you interested in leaving family and friends for a social evening. Please contact me on 07778 765021 with any suggestions you have.

I would like to wish my Club Manager, Terry Jackson, at Maidenhead GC, all the best in his appointment at Burnham Beeches GC. We have worked well together for five years and achieved some good results for Maidenhead GC. Finally, on behalf of our Section, we wish Gordon Child a speedy recovery from his recent health problem. I am sure Marion has the strength to ensure both come through this difficult time and look forward to seeing you both out next year at one of the BIGGA functions.

New members for this month are: John Crowe of Cherwell Edge Golf Club

Chris Faulkner of Lister Wildner Ltd, Corporate Member, and Dick Holgate of Lister Wildner Ltd, Corporate Member.

David Haskell-Craig MG

East Midlands

On November 6 and 7 at Beedles Lake Golf Centre the Section ran a very well presented Essential Management Skills course, with Frank Newbury. Although we could only muster eight delegates for the course it was still a successful two days. I would also like to thank BIGGA HQ and our Section Chairman, Adie Porter, for organising the course; Frank Newbury for running it and Beedles Lake Golf Centre for hosting. One more word of thanks should be extended to Andy Humble, of Toro, who kindly sponsored one of the delegates. Please remember with your suggestions and support we can organise a lot more of these training courses, so let your committee know what you want. We are hoping to organise a Basic Chainsaw course and a Grinding course, so if you're interested please let me know as places are limited.

This year's AGM was held at the delightful golf course of Sherwood Forest on November 14. The day started at 10.30am with a three-man Texas scramble. The weather for the day, however, was quite awful with several teams

walking in from the course. However this did not deter some members from producing some fine scores.

The scores were as follows 1. Kevin Kinzer, Pete Larter and Keir Taylor; 2. Steven Mackie, Jeff Dickinson and Russell Latham; 3. Ian Needham, Mark Bindley and Adie Porter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kim Kirkham and his staff for presenting the course in such wonderful condition for the time of year. I also would like to thank all those committee members who helped out with the smooth running of the day, and the stewardess for a really great meal. A special thank you should also be extended to Roger and Beryl Barker for travelling all the way to Sherwood Forest to bring the prizes. Finally, I would like to thank Vitax Ltd for sponsoring the day.

Onto the serious business of the AGM, the following members were voted onto the committee, Chairman. Adie Porter; Vice-Chairman. Ian Needham; Secretary. Antony Bindley; Treasurer. Richard Barker. Additional committee members, Steve Goode, Jamie Bedford, Gavin Robson, Jeff Dickinson and David James.

The 100 draw results are as follows 1. No 9, Kevin Kinzer, £60; 2. No.30 Adie Porter, £25; 3. Andrew Astle, £15.

This year's Regional Seminar was held on November 27 at Hinckley GC. and again proved to be a successful event, including several good quality speakers. I feel that all those members who turned up for the day were not disappointed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter Larter for all his hard work in organising the day.

Finally, I would like to wish Frank Kempster all the best in his new venture. Frank has worked at Glen Gorse GC for the past ten years and prior to this Scraftoft GC. He has always been a very popular member of the Section and a much respected Greenkeeper. Also congratulations should be extended to Derrick Foster, of Cosby GC, on achieving his NVQ level 3.

Antony Bindley

Midland

Trust all had an excellent Christmas coupled with copious amounts of cheer, and that the ensuing delirium tremens and expanded waistline has now gone.

On a serious note however, you are all aware that our Section Chairman, Mr P. Richmond has stood down so as to afford younger blood their opportunities. It is hoped that you shall do so! The Committee, and I'm sure all Members, would like to convey their expressive and most sincere thanks to Peter

for his great efforts over the last 16 years as a Committee Member. A true gentleman and ambassador of the profession. Your learned counsel shall be sorely missed Sir.

Furthemore, thanks must also go to the fine efforts of Mr K.T. Blake, Treasurer, for looking after the Section's finances so well. Also gratitude to Mr P.Gates, Mr M. Hughes and Mr S. Wood for their contributions.

On a lighter note, congratulations to E. Stant upon reaching his 30th Birthday. Welcome to the Club. It's downhill from here chap, trust me I'm a surgeon (tree at least). Your anatomical studies at Rhino's University of Biology shall provide you with the frustration of memory only.

This year's golfing fixtures are provisionally set for, spring: Vale of Evesham GC. summer: Blackwell GC. autumn: Halesowen GC. winter: Enville GC. Our thanks to the afore mentioned Clubs for their kind gratuitous affordance. Rhys has yet again excelled in securing such great venues. Play well folks.

During the next couple of weeks you shall be receiving a questionnaire requesting your thoughts and ideas on educational trips/courses, non-golfing social events, and any other pertinent considerations you may have. So get your thinking caps on, and please respond. Remember, this is your organisation. Committee can only serve your wishes if known. Your input and support is of paramount importance. Thanks to P.McCrainor for sponsoring the above postal run.

I've just been advised that Morton Morrell College should have sent you a list of their current courses, ranging from Higher Diplomas to the Use of Abrasive Wheels. Considering the above paragraph, perhaps food for thought! A. Smith shall be investigating all possibilities on your behalf, and reporting ideas forthwith.

It doesn't seem like five minutes since last year's BTME, and it's here yet again. This year, ClubHouse has joined forces with us, and perhaps offers the opportunity to show your Club's Committee Members just how dynamic and professional our profession and organisation is. A great public relations opportunity.

Finally, good luck and congratulations to C. Beet in securing the Deputy's position at Stourbridge GC.

Wishing you all a successful and happy new year.

Sean McDade



SOUTH EAST
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260 956

Kent

Happy New Year to you all, yes I have been persuaded into another year of writing this column. I hope for a better response from you lot this year. November 27th saw our Turkey Trot comp at the very dry North Foreland down in Broadstairs. The conditions were very tough with a cold strong wind off the sea. The course was in fine condition and a big thank you to Steve Suttle and his staff for presenting a great course. I would also like to thank my playing partners on the day both from royal St George's, Andy "Scouse" Howarth and Jo "Jutter" Silcock for a very enjoyable day. There were a couple of extreme golf moments both on par 3's. The first was Gary Debenham on the 14th when he somehow hit his 8-iron onto a house roof which hit several walls and no windows and stayed on the roof. Next up on the 16th I witnessed Barry Bradshaw hit his 7-iron onto the road and then hit, with some force, the D in the Captain Digby pub sign. He has never been good at keeping out of pubs. Onto the results and, as I said earlier, the conditions were extremely tough and only the very best could really compete. The winner of the Scotts Shield with 37 points was ME.(2 blobs). Second place Chris Wright 34 and third place John Fullagar 33 points. Thanks to Craig from UAP for donating a top DVD player for the raffle which was won by John Thompson. Also a big thank you to all the other sponsors. Thanks once again to all the staff at North Foreland for making us so welcome and feeding us so well.

Other news is that Bob Cook is now working for himself with his own company called T. Parker and Sons (Turf Management 2003) Limited. Those who know Bob will know he can offer a broad range of products. You can call him on 07798 866345 for all your turf care needs.

Sorry to Mark Smith for the spelling mistakes the other month. He was strimming not striking when he damaged his eye while using a strimmer not a striker.

I hope to see you all this year at all the golf days which will be announced soon.

Call or e-mail me with news on 01732 875020 or jrbatkhgolf@aol.com

Jason Bean

Surrey

Welcome to 2003. I'm sure you've all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and following an October, November and December that was as wet as wet can get you must all be praying for a dry start to the New Year. Let's hope your dreams come true, along with an understanding membership, a bottomless budget and a lack of disease that will throw the fungicide reps into a frenzy of woe.

November 2002 will be remembered for two very successful events, the Surrey Turkey Trot on the 21st and the South East Region Seminar on the 27th. Banstead Downs Golf Club was the venue for the AGM and Turkey Trot and, in weather that was slightly damp, over 60 players thanked Barry Robertson's lucky stars that Banstead sits on top of well draining chalk. The whole course was in tremendous condition and we thank Barry, his Greenkeepers and the club for allowing us to play. Thanks also to the caterers for treating us to an excellent and traditional Christmas dinner.

The Surrey Section AGM followed the golf and all went very smoothly including the vote that resulted from the only letter that was received prior to the meeting. The letter from Barry Robertson proposed that the trade and guests should be allowed to win any of the prizes available and not just a separate 'Trade Prize'. A vote was taken and the almost unanimous decision was "yes" to the proposal. As no new committee members were proposed the present committee were re-elected en masse. The dinner followed the AGM and the prizes for the day were distributed to the winners, 1. Jochiem Holgersson, Richmond GC, 40pts; 2. Adie Locke, Hindhead GC, 36pts; 3. Gary Rowe, Banstead GC, 35pts; 4. Dave Goddard, Sunningdale GC, 35 pts; 5. Rob George, Coombe Hill GC, 34pts. Nearest the Pin. Ian (Jelly Hands) Sellars. Longest Drive. Dave Langheim, Foxhills GC. At this stage we must give special mention to the unlucky person who would have won the Trade prize, had the trade prize not been withdrawn due to the AGM vote. On reflection, due to his breaking down in dismay after learning he had won nothing, it is probably better to let Gary Ogilvie remain anonymous. The sponsors for the day were Tacit and a big thank you to them for the gallons of Champagne given as prizes.

The South East Region Seminar was Surrey Section's responsibility this year and from the massive and fully subscribed turn out it was a huge success. Thank you Roehampton Club

for looking after us so well, providing excellent facilities for the seminar and the lunch. The quality speakers included Ian McMillan, Eddie Seaward, John Albutt, David Golding and, from Sky Sports, Matt Lorenzo. Their topics were diverse and made the day both memorable and informative.

Dan Lightfoot was seconded onto the committee after volunteering to help organise the day and, together with Anthony Freeman and Derek Farrington, they really did produce a seminar that was not to be missed.

Adie Locke now gets a second mention in this edition, for this month's congratulatory paragraph belongs to him and his wife Tracy. Their son Alden Joshua 7lbs 3ozs was born on October 22.

Brian Willmott



**SOUTH WEST &
SOUTH WALES**
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352 194

Devon and Cornwall

A happy new year to you all, I hope you have had an enjoyable festive season. The Section's first meeting of the new year will be held at East Devon Golf Club on Thursday, January 16, Please make sure your entries are sent to Steve Evans 32, Canons Way, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8BJ. The day will once again be sponsored by Barenbrug Seeds and start with a singles Stableford golf competition with start times from 8.30am. For non golfers the course walk will leave the club house at approximately 10.30am. After lunch our educational talk will be presented by Jeff Mills on his recent trip to the States. The Devon Garden Machinery-sponsored November meeting was held at Bude & North Cornwall Golf Club on Wednesday, November 13. This meeting was also the Section's AGM.

The day started with Rob Guntrip, of DGM, starting our golfing members for the Toro Trophy, which was played in a foursome format. After an excellent lunch Alan Dommatt from Devon Garden Machinery presented the prizes on behalf of Toro and DGM to:- 1. P.Newcome, East Devon, & J.Mills, Taunton, 41pts; 2. T.Clark, Crediton, & R.Cook, Bowood, 41pts; 3. A. Gawman, St Mellion, & D.Bagio, St Mellion, 40pts.

The Section would like to express its gratitude to the day's sponsors, Devon Garden Machinery, for their support and to Bude & North Cornwall Golf Club for allowing the Section use of their excellent facilities and to all of Bude & North Cornwall GC staff for

making the Section so welcome.

The Section's AGM followed the golf presentation and was opened by the Chairman, Cary Rawlings. The Administrator started his report by informing members present that he would be standing down from the post of section administrator after over thirteen years on December 31 due to his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Burnham & Berrow Golf Club.

The Administrator thanked members for their support shown to him over the years with this meeting being typical as over 70 members attended the day.

He also thanked all the Section's trade associates who have supported the Section over the years of change, without their support the Section would not be as strong as it is today. But it's a two-way thing as our sponsors are only too willing to support the Section because of the truly superb membership attendance at our events.

The Administrator informed members that he has always tried to represent the membership at both Regional and National levels and he assured members that their views had been heard.

The Administrator moved on to the balance sheet for the year ending September 30, 2002. The balance for the year-end of £1357.57 shows a loss of £284.87 compared with last year's balance sheet. There had been an outstanding bill of £289 to the printers from last year's balance sheet for the 2001-02 fixture cards which has been paid within this financial year. Also the Section had only recently received an outstanding £100 sponsorship fee. In real terms the Section made a profit of £100 compared to the real term loss of £110 last year.

As mentioned earlier the section remains indebted to all the trade Companies who have sponsored our section meetings over the last year.

Aventis, Avoncrop, Barenbrug, Devon Garden Machinery, PJ Flegg, Roffeys, Rigby Taylor, Supaturf. The administrator thanked Phoenix Irrigation for sponsoring the fixture cards for the first year of their two-year sponsorship package.

The Chairman opened his report by informing members of the sad loss of John Breyley this year and the illnesses of Gordon Child and Paula Humphries and wished Gordon and Paula a speedy recovery. He advised members present that the Section's educational officer, Shaun Getson, had left the industry and wished him well in his new career. He continued by informing members that the next 12 months will see major

changes to the Section. As mentioned earlier the Administrator, Richard Whyman, will be stepping down after 13 years, he hoped that a new Administrator could be found from members present and members will support him / her by returning entries on time. The Chairman, concluding his report, thanked the Section committee for all the efforts over the last year.

Jeff Mills, reporting on regional matters, informed members of the planned events the Region were holding and hoped the members would support the Region by attending the Seminar and BTME trip. He informed members of the new Futures Sub Committee set up to review the Association with any changes being put forward to the National Board for consideration. The Region's representative is James Braithwaite and if any member has a constructive point please inform your Section committee.

Election of officers: C.Rawlings, Chairman; R..Shapland, Vice Chairman; J.Mills, Regional Board; B.Mitchell, R.Wisdom, J.Bullen; S.Evans, Section Administrator; C.Ralp, President; D. Hunt, Trade, B.Spratt, Trade. Richard Whyman

South Coast

I hope you all had a good Christmas and no doubt many of us will be trying to keep to those New Year resolutions. Seasons and years seem to come and go so quickly that life can become a blur. One thing is for sure, the pressure on us to continue to produce quality golf courses under ever trying conditions. Our old adversary, the weather! It seems to throw us new and more difficult challenges every year. But we all accept and rise to these fresh challenges, but then I suppose we don't know any other way! At the start of this New Year be positive and make a determined effort to support every Section event this year. Being part of BIGGA is not about reading your magazine once a month! The more time and effort you put in the more rewards you will reap! So make that effort and make that difference!

Our thoughts are with some special friends of the section who are currently under treatment for illnesses, Regional Administrator, Paula Humphries, and Amenity Technology's, Stuart Ashworth. Our best wishes go out to them and their families and we look forward to seeing them in better health very soon.

December saw the last gathering of the year as the section arrived at High Post Golf Club for our Turkey Trot which, as ever, was sponsored by New Forest Farm Machinery

and Sheerwater. The course was in superb condition and a credit to Lauchlan Millar and his team and even the weather was good. Winners on the day were: Kevin Glass, 38pts; Paul Cooper, 36pts; Alex McCombie, 36pts; Trade Prize. Colin White, 34pts; Nearest the Pin. Martin Samuel. Longest Drive. Joe Newman.

Many thanks for all who turned out and made it such a great day! It was also great to see Paula Humphries and also her husband, Mike. Thanks on the day must go to High Post Golf Club for their superb hospitality; to Lauchlan Millar and his team for all their hard work; the caterers for a superb meal and, last but no means least, to New Forest Farm Machinery and Sheerwater for their support. Dare I forget Chris Sturgess our hard working tournament organiser? Of course not! Well done Chris, another great day!

Don't forget the Section Seminar at Canford Magna Golf Club on February 26. Details will be with you very soon.

It just leaves me to thank all of our sponsors for their support over 2002. Without their support our Section wouldn't be the same so let's make their support for 2003 worth that much more by making that extra effort to attend!

There will be many of us venturing North for BTME this month, to meet old friends and make many new ones too. A full report will follow.

Until next time.

Alex McCombie

South West

I hope everybody had a jolly good time over the Christmas New Year break. As I'm writing this report the Christmas do at Cirencester has not yet happened, so I can't tell you who won. You will have to wait for the next thrilling episode. Whoever does win it will undoubtedly be very worthy winners!

The South West Section would like to welcome to our ranks a new Head Greenkeeper. Congratulations to Richard Whyman who has just taken up his new post at Burnham & Berrow Golf Club. We all look forward to having Richard in our area!

Also, well done to Wayne Vincent, the new boss at Cotswold Hills Golf Club. It is Wayne's first Head Greenkeepers job. We all hope you enjoy your new challenge.

As you read this in January let's hope the weather is not too wet and work is moving forward well towards the new season.

Robin Greaves

Re: Comments on the hollow tine theory

The last two weeks of August, 28 holes to hollow tine and top dress, four greenkeepers, no big budget, a little sweat and great results. Sidney Mercer's comments on Gordon Child's article, I feel are wide of the mark. We at Taunton Vale have, over the last five years, maintained exactly as Gordon and Richard Windows suggest and for us, has proved a far superior method than the late September dates we previously used. I'm sure if we can manage to cope so can other Clubs but 'each to their own' and realise that every situation is different.

Steve Welch
Course Manager
Taunton Vale Golf Club
Somerset

In response...

In response to Mr Mercer's letter in the November issue of Greenkeeper International I offer the following comments.

The aim of the article was to explain a philosophy with regard to obtaining maximum results from deep aeration. In our increasingly wetter climate, the autumn months – the conventional time for such work – have become far wetter than they used to be. In order to optimize performance of deep aeration treatment we must, therefore, look to other times of the year when the soils are likely to be drier and thus more receptive to the task, both in terms of drainage improvement and surface recovery.

Such a generic philosophy may not be achievable or even required in some cases and our advice in this regard would of course be site specific and only administered after appropriate discussion with the turf manager/committee etc, following a course review. Obviously, describing every such eventuality (eg. soil type, requirement of the club etc.) in the constraints of a relatively brief article is impossible.

Finally, there is no doubt that the climate is changing. If we as an industry are to adapt to this change, which we surely must, we have to adopt the best management practices to ensure the best possible surfaces are provided for the golfers.

Richard Windows
STRI

Many Thanks

I would just like to thank all members, staff and trade personnel who have so kindly sent their best wishes to me over the last few weeks.

Unfortunately at the time of writing I am still in hospital awaiting my turn for the operation. I suppose, at least Marion knows where I am as they won't let me escape.

Meanwhile I look forward to the time I can thank you all in person, and once again enjoy your company.

Gordon Child
Churston

Jim Arthur 1

I am writing in response to the letter from Jim Arthur entitled 'How can we Progress?' published in last month's issue.

I have read this letter a number of times now and I am still searching to find the connection between Scott MacCallum's article on St Andrews Bay and the one from Neil Thomas. There cannot and is not a comparison to be made between the two, how can projects like ours be blamed for Chairmen of Green sacking perfectly competent greenkeepers. Surely this is down to educating the membership and as Derek Green said "properly defining the role of the Chairman". This is surely a more sensible line of action than blaming "the golf course down the road" because they dare to do something a little different.

I can also find no comparison to be made between a guy who has been voted onto a committee for a term of office and someone who spends \$50,000,000 of his "own" personal fortune. Which one do you think has the right to dictate how their golf course should look? Answers on a postcard to Mr J. H. Arthur, Budleigh Salterton, etc.

Neil Ballingall
Golf Course Superintendent
St Andrews Bay
Fife

Jim Arthur 2

It gladdens my heart to read another letter from Jim Arthur in our magazine - Greenkeeper International December issue.

I have, for more years that I care to remember, been a supporter of Jim's ideas and methods as have a lot of greenkeepers, many of who would support but not necessarily be able to carry out.

I have been a retired Course Manager now for four years but still take interest in what is happening as regards greenkeeping. Jim's letter let us all know what greenkeepers are up against in the world today.

How many golf courses today do we visit where we have an abundance of natural grasses? We see swards of thick meadow grass with pop-up heads not far away, lush wormy areas and fescue and bent swallowed up.

Like Jim I am not knocking Head Greenkeepers. This is what most have to do either directed or for a quiet life. Very few are able to do their own thing.

Jim Arthur has been a consistent help to the greenkeeping profession, never afraid to voice his opinion. This doesn't mean he's never wrong but time continuously let's us he's more right than wrong.

He has stood by his ideals throughout his life, never wavering and this is why at times he courts controversy as very often people don't like to hear the truth.

John Nudds
Hunstanton
Norfolk

P.S. What has happened to Sludgecombe Municipality? I miss its humour

LETTERS CONTINUED ON OVER THE PAGE...



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Jim Arthur 3

It is not often these days that I have the opportunity to be involved with greenkeeping or golf management related issues outside of my full time position of Regional Golf Course Superintendent and Superintendent at my own 54 hole, golf facility. However, I am currently recovering from minor surgery and find myself at home with time to respond and help Mr J. H. Arthur with his query in "How can we progress?".

Perhaps it would be easier to at first think in terms outside of golf and greenkeeping to any industry or product that has evolved & progressed through a long and successful history. We are, whether we like it or not, caught up in this all of the time, as sure as tomorrow will follow today. Think upon this, when I was a young lad I wanted to grow up and own a Ford Cortina Mark II. A great car for its day, 30 years ago, but today I transport my family around in a modern, safe, smooth, economical family-sized hatchback. Both cars, each in their own day though. If Ford still made Cortinas, no one would buy them. Commercially they have been superseded. You could go on and on, think of LPs and Compact Discs, mobile phones of 10 years ago compared to those of today, your Sinclair BBC Basic computer compared to today's latest Windows gizmo.

I now return to golf. I am a bit of a traditionalist. I would like to think I know some of golf and greenkeeping's history, and their traditional theories and practices. In fact I base most of my professional beliefs in these, but I would be an out of touch and out of work Course Manager if I did not continually learn, study, practice and monitor greenkeeping science, grasses, fertilisers, machinery, practices and, perhaps equally important, the golf market, as an industry/business and the golfer's - or can I use that word that is often forgotten by some - CUSTOMER'S expectations.

It is true that Links, Heathland or Downland golf is a fantastic and enjoyable experience, but one that the vast majority of golfers in the UK do not partake on a regular basis for reasons of location and, if truth be known, they are probably not good enough, find it too difficult, and the presentation of the course does not meet with their perception of what a golf course should perhaps look like. In the commercial world, whether an inland private or proprietary club, trying to meet the expectations of your golfing customer are fairly important. - Otherwise you go out of business!

Modern techniques, dwarf rye grasses, fertilisers, machinery etc. are tools to allow the manager of that business to strive for higher standards, improved quality, value for money for the customer, address problems of wear and playability during winter months, and contribute to the success of the business.

Take this as an example. Ask 100 golfers in December whether they want to play off a tee mat next to a tee of 300 square yards of pretty cold, poorly presented and recovering bent/fescue turf that is out of play to recover for the following season (reality may dictate that the turf is just sick poa), or actually playing off a 300 square yard grass tee of dwarf rye grass that is regularly fed, divoted, aerified still takes a mowing once a week, and does this week in, week out, throughout the year. - I know what answer you would get.

Take this further. Two courses located next to each other. One has tee mats and temporary greens in the winter, the other one has grass tees and main greens through properly applied modern management techniques. I do not need to tell you where the majority of golfers will be playing. As a side issue the owner of the course that has all the golfers, is making more money and potentially can be charging a higher rate. If it is a private club it will have many happy members that are proud of their course, club and maintenance staff.

This is the modern reality. I am sure that those behind St. Andrews Bay have done their homework and it is unfair to criticise their objectives to make money and fulfil a gap in the market with a modern style, playable golf course that offers something slightly different in an area of traditional Links courses.

It is true that some other high end "Championship" courses built in recent years have failed, but this is often down to poor market research, absurdly difficult design by a well known "Your pro that "Joe Average" just finds too hard to play. A design that is also too difficult and expensive to maintain and with grasses that are simply not tolerant of the climatic conditions or could ever cope with the amount of play needed to sustain the course as a viable business.

In summary the answer to the question of "How can we progress?" is fairly obvious. We are market led and it pains me somewhat to say that we do not as a professional body or individual greenkeepers have a modern enough understanding of our industry or business. That understanding should be complete, armed with the traditional values and practices of the past, but with the skill and professional management techniques to satisfy a modern golf industry. Perhaps we again go back to training. It pains me to say that at present we do not have enough greenkeepers with the full armoury of skills required to carry this out in the 21st Century. This may be because we have spent too much time looking back. It is perhaps also that we need to work closer with the game's other bodies to develop fully an environment that skilled greenkeepers wish to work in and receive the recognition from a more enlightened golf club operator, private club, or employer. It often disappoints me to hear what cannot be achieved on a golf course in terms of playing conditions as opposed to what can, and this often from greenkeepers. Some golfers seem to have accepted this as a norm, while some are frustrated and vent their feelings on the much-maligned Greenkeeper, who is forced to leave or is sacked. I am afraid that both parties, some greenkeepers and some golfers (club officials) are equally guilty of lack of knowledge and modern understanding.

Well after my rather long and rambling reply I am not off to bulldoze flat every Links course in the country, or over feed and water it into a stinking bog. I may just go up to work, open my locker and clean my clubs. Oh yes they are the old bladed ones I have had for nearly 20 years, with the exception of my wooden woods, with regular steel shafts. I wonder how many Greenkeeper International readers play with the latest cavity backed wonder weapons, with graphite shafts and woods that are some strange metal alloy about the size of a house brick. Perhaps that is just progress.

**Paul Copsey
Hawley
Kent**