

The administration side of the Trust is turning green at a rapid rate thanks to the influence of Gordon Moir, the Links Superintendent, and his Secretary, Lorna Marroney. The Links Trust has this year made a concerted effort to contact as many companies as is practically possible to request that no junk mail is forwarded without prior consent. This, although still in its infancy, is already reducing the amount of waste, which would otherwise be accumulated. Everyone involved within the St Andrews Links Trust now recycles and members (seasonal ticket holders) are even bringing their own cardboard and paper for recycling. Even the Links News is now printed on chlorine free 100% recycled paper and there are regular articles explaining how the environmental credentials of the course are improving.

Grass clippings from greens tees and aprons are collected at all times, while those produced from fairway cutting are collected 80% of the time. These clippings are stored briefly on the course before being transported to central storage sites. There they are mixed with other organic materials and composted, to be used again as divot mix, top dressing or construction material.



▲ The cardboard recycling station at St. Andrews Links Trust

NOTTS GOLF CLUB'S SHEEP GRAZING SCHEME

The course at the Notts Golf Club (Hollinwell) forms an ecologically valuable oasis of heathland habitat within a landscape now dominated by intensive agriculture. However, until recently, the heathland character of the course was in gradual decline as large areas of land out of play had been allowed to revert to scrub woodland. In 1997 Course Manager, Philip Stain, introduced the club to The Sherwood Forest Trust, an organisation able to provide advice and finance towards the restoration of this important habitat. The Trust provided the club with information and support sufficient to convince the members that it was time to act. The Club heeded the message and entered into a 10 year long Countryside Stewardship Scheme, putting into place a radical management plan. The plan has been created with the aims of preventing further decline and restoring vast tracts of heathland back to their former glory.

Philip is well aware that the benefits of this work are two fold. "From an ecological viewpoint the work is very important, Nottinghamshire has lost 95% of its heathland and it is therefore vital that the club acts as a competent custodian of this important habitat." Yet he has also noted the benefit to the club, both from a greenkeeping and a playing point of view. "The removal of dense, ecologically poor woodland from areas close to play has resulted in increased light and air movement throughout the course, which in turn has led to an improvement in the quality of playing surfaces." In addition, the course has re-captured much

of the former heathland character with spectacular views appearing from where before there were only dense stands of spindly birch trees. Ian McLachlan, Chairman of the Greens Committee, is pleased with the recent increase in prestige of the Course, which he feels can be attributed to the heathland restoration work. "In the past five years the Club's Golf World ranking has risen from 47th to 25th and the assessors stated this rise was largely due to the improved character of the course."

The fact that the restoration work has been ongoing for a number of years makes this project as a whole ineligible for the New Initiative award. However, one new initiative introduced this year as part of the scheme did catch the judges' eye. This was the introduction of sheep grazing.

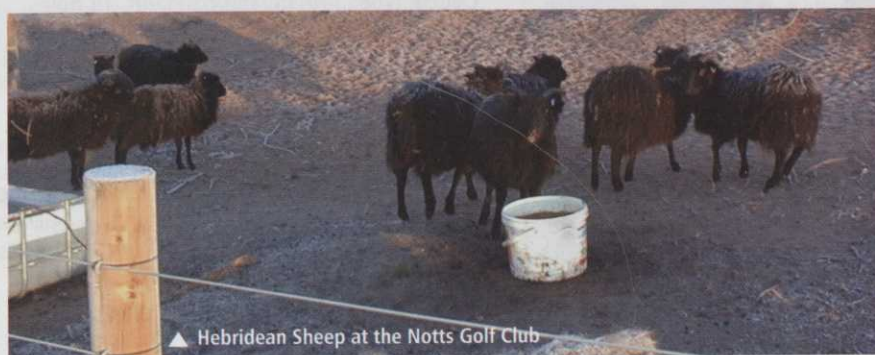
The club has cleared land on such a large scale that it has simply not got the resources to prevent scrub regeneration, especially the growth of self-set birch saplings. When discussing this problem with a representative from the Sherwood Forrest Trust, Ian McLachlan flippantly mentioned the prospect of using Hebridean sheep and the initiative was born. Any doubts that the membership had regarding the idea were allayed through an explanation of the benefits of sheep grazing and a description of the support that the Club had managed to gain for the project. Adam Goodall, of the Sherwood Forest Trust, took on the role of Project Organiser. He secured matched-funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the 2.5 Km of fencing required to keep the sheep within two grazing areas on the course. These areas were out-of-play and combined covered approximately 12 ha.

The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust provided the 55 sheep, (known as the flying flock) which were introduced to the course in September. The Hebridean breed was specially selected as they will graze woody vegetation such as birch saplings, thus preventing scrub regeneration. In addition, this breed will selectively eliminate problematic grass species from the heathland sward, such as Purple Moor Grass. The current plan is that the sheep will remain on the course for several years until the heathland has re-established and stabilised. They may then be moved to another section of the course or indeed another forward thinking golf club such as Notts that has the vision, the contacts and the drive to undertake such a superb initiative.

The New Initiatives Award has been a highly successful new category within the BIGGA competition and though it has been won by a large scale, well supported project this year, there is nothing to say that a small, self financed, well thought out and well executed initiative won't take the award next year. What the judges are looking for is ingenuity and inspiration, so if you have a cunning plan that you intend to execute next year, make sure you get the 2004 BIGGA entry form filled in!



▲ Left, Philip Stain and right, Ian McLachlan within one of the grazing areas at the Notts Golf Club



▲ Hebridean Sheep at the Notts Golf Club

TALKING HEADS

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS



Name: Stuart Hogg
Course: Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club, Inverness
Region: Scotland
Course type: Links, 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus three

Does your club have an environmental/ecological management plan?

Yes, we are committed to Green and were the seventh club in Scotland and 16th in Europe to be recognised.



Name: Paul Eddlestone
Course: Fishwick Hall Golf Club, near Preston
Region: Northern
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus three, plus casual labour

We are in the process of putting one together and are very keen to move forward on this.



Name: Phil Gates
Course: Trentham Golf Club, Trentham, near Stoke
Region: Midland
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus seven

We do, backed up by English Nature and STRI. We are one of 70 clubs visited by an environmental official each year.



Name: Gary Johnstone
Course: Southerdown Golf Club, Bridgend, South Wales
Region: South West and South Wales
Course type: Downland links, 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus five

Not at the moment, but with one of our members being chairman of the Glamorgan Wildlife Trust and arranging a visit from an ecologist, we are in the process of getting one. We tried to get some wild flowers growing but sheep on our common land soon got rid of those.



Name: Peter McMorran
Course: Farnham Golf Club, Surrey
Region: South East
Course type: Heathland/parkland, 18 holes
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus six

Not at the present moment, but we are working on recommendations from English Nature and STRI and have felled 300 trees so that we can establish heath grasses and heather on the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 11th holes.



Name: Jim Eager
Course: Royal Belfast Golf Club, Holywood, Co Down
Region: Northern Ireland
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus seven

Not at present, but we are aware of the factors surrounding these issues. We have conservation volunteers, who make recommendations on the woodland etc.

1

2

Are you aware of the variety of wildlife using the course?

Very much so. We have a big population of skylarks and also starlings, linnets, greenfinches, thrushes and yellow hammers among others, in addition to some rabbits.

Yes, we certainly are. In fact we have identified and listed the wildlife which includes rabbits, deer, voles, birds, foxes and squirrels, We also have a badger sett.

Very much so. We have a wide range including rabbits, goshawks, buzzards, which are looking for nesting places in nearby woodland, green finches, nuthatches and goldcrest and many others. We work hard with nest boxes for owls and bats.

We have Dartford warblers, sparrowhawks, yellowhammers green woodpeckers, buzzards, jackdaws, skylarks, crows, foxes, rabbits voles shrews, stoats, adders and many more.

We had a report done by the local council and have a record of all wild life, examples being rabbits, roe deer, foxes, moles, birds, including kestrels and woodpeckers.

We are indeed. We have a lot of rabbits and some badgers and foxes, the odd pheasant and squirrel.

3

Are the membership concerned with the ecological enhancement of the course?

We have their full backing. Over the last six or seven years we have done course reports and the management plan for winter is always announced in September or October. We also have a page on our web site.

We are making our members more aware of this and are trying to educate them by highlighting issues and showing them the broad band of an ecological plan.

A certain percentage are aware of it. I let members know via the notice board about planned winter work.

They are and we are doing as much as possible, but members are well aware that we are very restricted because we are on common land We have 40 commoners who have the rights to graze anything from goats to sheep and horses, although only two of them are active, grazing sheep.

Our chairman has done seminars for our members, making them aware of work done on the course and explaining why we are taking trees down. This provides a better environment for the development of turf because shade has caused us problems.

Yes they certainly are. If we are planning work on the course we inform members via the club notice board and they are very quick to give us their views.

4

Do you have an organic waste policy?

Because we are a links course we have very little organic waste. What few clippings we have we feed back on to course pathways.

Not as yet, but we are trying to implement one.

We have just started to develop one with compost boxes on the cards at some point this winter.

We collect grass clippings, turn it constantly and use it for top dressing. We collect bottles, cans etc in containers and these are recycled.

We have discussed with English Nature and the STRI about recycling and the cutting and collection of grass. Also the areas we cut once or twice a year enabling us to develop plant life over a period of time.

Not as yet, although it has been discussed. There are bottle banks nearby.

5

Is the current environmental legislation regarding waste management, chemical usage and protected species/habitats to be effective?

I think it is effective. We make minimal use of chemicals and fertilisers. Some courses have to rely on them at the moment, but I believe everyone will need to alter their ways sometime in the not too distant future because of the changes that are taking place.

Very much so. Legislation and government bodies are helping us to become aware of ecological issues in general.

I do, very much so as far as greenkeepers are concerned, but then are a few niggles from other members of the public who can buy chemicals over the counter. There has been a good education promotion by BIGGA over the last five to ten years.

I don't think there are enough people going round golf course enforcing this. We don't use anything harmful to sheep and don't use fungicides. We haven't any disease problems and spray only once a year when the sheep are taken off the course.

Yes I do. This is very important because of the safety of individuals in chemicals and waste collection. We don't have any protected species on our course, but obviously we would look after them carefully if we did.

Yes, it certainly is in this neck of the woods. We have had a waste disposal company coming for the past two years. We have a skip and we shoot rabbits which cause us a few problems. We are keen to protect virtually everything else and don't allow people on to the course who may give us problems.

NEW PRODUCTS

FIRST FIVE DECK

John Deere's new 3245C four wheel drive mower, is the company's first five deck rotary machine for semi-rough amenity grass.

The 3245C features a powerful 'clean and quiet' John Deere Series 220 liquid cooled and turbocharged diesel engine, with a maximum power rating of 48.5hp. The engine is contained within a new, aerodynamic hood made of a composite material for extra durability and reduced noise levels.

Combining the ability to follow ground contours very closely with optimum cutting performance, at mowing speeds of up to 9mph, the 3245C has five 53cm (21in) independent rotary rear discharge decks, made of heavy duty 10 gauge steel. These provide a total cutting width of 228cm (90in), while height of cut is quick and easy to change, without tools, from 25 to 102mm in 6mm increments.

Individual turn assist brakes work in conjunction with the newly designed hydrostatic foot controls to stop or slow the mower for tight turns and to provide additional traction when working on slopes.

A new Command Arm operator console, as featured on the John Deere 2500 greensmower, is designed for maximum driver comfort and convenience. This provides fingertip control of the throttle, deck drive and raising and lowering of the cutting decks – it even has a built in drink holder, which can also be used to hold a two-way radio or mobile phone if required.

Further operator benefits include a high capacity 68 litre (15gal) fuel tank for all day mowing, power steering, adjustable deluxe seat and steering column, and 50W halogen headlights for increased visibility. Options include cruise control and a mulching kit.

For further information Tel: 01949 860491.



NEW FROM JCB GROUND CARE

JCB Groundcare has teamed up with Countax to produce a new tractor with unrivalled performance.

Available through both JCB Groundcare and Countax dealers, the JCB branded D20-50 is built to class leading specifications in terms of power, versatility and efficiency.

Powered by a direct injection, V-twin 20hp diesel engine, the tractor is highly economic with increased cutting between fills. Ideally suited for coverage of up to 10 acres, the JCB model has a grass collecting capacity of 380 litres.

In addition to power assisted steering, a series of automated functions make the D20-50 simple and convenient to use. The electronic 'dial-a-height' control adjusts the level of the cutter deck depending on the application. Electrically operated raising and lowering of the powered grass collector, push button emptying and easy interchanging of cutting decks combine to reduce manual effort to a minimum.

The interactive blade system utilises three contra-rotating blades for efficient cutting while the rear roller control allows the operator to set the perfect height for creating immaculate striped lawns. The high grass mulching deck uses chains fore and aft to cut long grass and scrub.

The JCB D20-50 has a dash-mounted fuel gauge, an operating management system which logs operating hours and service intervals, as well as several warning facilities which regulate the rev count and appropriate speeds for cutting. The result is optimum performance from the industry's most advanced cutting system.

In addition to its mowing capabilities, the D20-50 is a highly versatile piece of grounds maintenance machinery suited to a variety of further applications. The tractor has been designed to allow quick change between attachments and is compatible with Countax's range of accessories - including trailers, cutters, scarifiers, shredders and chippers. The PTO provides extra power when undertaking these activities.

The final feature prominent on the D20-50 is the inclusion of integral safety measures. The tractor cannot be started unless the handbrake is engaged and the tractor also boasts hydrostatic transmission with differential lock giving control on slopes and maximum traction in difficult conditions.

Telephone: 01889 561000.

NEW RANGE OF SPRAY PACKAGES

Spray Equipment Supplier, Kelland's Agricultural, has recently been appointed as a Suzuki dealer and introduced a new range of ATV based spray system packages which complement the company's range of self propelled sprayers.

Managing Director, Chris Kelland had identified both ATVs and ATV based spray systems as growing markets and sees the Suzuki appointment as an opportunity to enter a new sector which will assist sales of sprayers and other equipment.

The Suzuki Eiger 400 has been selected as the most suitable packaging partner for the range of spot sprayers and can be supplied with three or four metre boom kits.

For further information Tel: 01293766000



SOAK UP WITH A NEW MINI

With the vast amount of revenue now being paid for many sporting features and the need to keep people playing regardless of the results of a downpour or flooding; the last words any sporting organisation wants to hear are "rain stopped play". This is no longer the case with the new Mini Blotter from Contract Maintenance Services. This latest introduction has been designed as the answer to a majority of these situations. Within a short space of time this machine can make most saturated surfaces playable.

The Mini Blotter has a one metre working width and is capable of removing approximately 3,410 litres (750 imperial gallons) of water per hour. Special attention has been paid to the machines ground pressure and its balance; this ensures minimal compaction even when the drum is full.

This machine is ideal for a host of turf and artificial playing surfaces and is particularly good for removing water from covers, so that play can be restarted quicker.

The stainless steel drum is bonded with a well proven foam covering and the squeeze pressure is applied by an easy to adjust top mounted roller.

A 5.5hp OHV engine provides power to the transmission through an Eaton hydrostatic unit with final chain drives to the drum.

A lever on the handlebars gives instant forward or reverse travel, which makes the machine easy to operate even in relatively confined areas.

There are two models available, the Standard Mini which has gravity fed water discharge system or the Super Mini with a pump to empty the drum and the facility to connect a hose for removing deep puddles or water build-up in channels and other areas.

The main frame is constructed from powder-coated steel and mounted on two wheels which are fitted with 4ply tyres or a roller.

Sealed bearings are used throughout for longevity and the machine has a twelve-month warranty. Service exchange drums are available and the operation of



removing and refitting these takes under 30 minutes. There is a system available for towing the unit between golf greens using an ATV, Truckster or Compact tractor. A specially designed stand takes the pressure off the foam covering when the machine is in storage

The new Mini Blotters from CMS can keep outdoor sports on schedule and during a wet season repays the investment and earns it keep very quickly.

For further information Tel: 07740 483175



BUNKER SOLUTIONS

The Mantis BunkerMaster provides the ideal partner for general bunker dressing and management.

When used as a rake, the machine aerates the top 4cm of sand leaving a texture that simply needs final dressing using a traditional bunker rake. Dressing sand is however not the only benefit that the new BunkerMaster offers. The ability of the machine to aerate only the top layer of sand allows the easy redistribution of sand in a bunker that has been over-played. The extra depth that builds up at the bunker exit point, where players rake the sand as they leave the hazard, can easily be moved back into the base of the bunker.

The same rake attachment is a very effective professional steel spring dethatcher.

Due to its light weight and manoeuvrability, it can remove moss and thatch build up from the previously inaccessible areas of the course such as bunker banks, surrounds, and the undulating fringes of greens.

By removing the Rake/Dethatcher attachment, a pair of tilling tines can be attached allowing the simple preparation and maintenance of flower beds around the clubhouse. With a working width of 9" / 23cm and the ability to work down to 25cm, the Mantis produces a fine tilth ready for planting.

Using the same tines the Mantis can be used to weed to a depth of 5cm between plants in existing borders.

By removing the engine from the Mantis BunkerMaster and attaching it to the optional 76cm professional hedge cutter bar, routine trimming and maintenance of shrubs and hedges is easily accomplished.

For further information Tel: 01614741525

OUT FRONT FLAIL

Rytec has introduced the PF1600 out-front flail, which combines high quality finish with durable build and cost effective price.

Following years of development in the field the all new PF1600 provides a reliable alternative to rotary mowing units, able to cut grass from short and dry to long and wet with equal ease. The cut grass is then spread evenly across the full width of the mower. A static mulching blade reduces the volume of cuttings to a minimum while front and rear rubber flaps allow material in, but stop stones and projections from flying out.

Rytec's PF1600 is available for most popular makes of out-front mowing tractors.

A full width easily adjustable rear roller and solid puncture proof front castor wheels control cutting height and combined with a centre mounted front roller a prevent scalping. Choice of flails including Rytec's AERO flail allow the cutting of all types of grass in all conditions with a very high quality of finish. Heavy duty gearbox and oil immersed drive shaft reduce running temperature and therefore increase reliability while remote greasers keep maintenance time to a minimum.

To add to all these features and benefits the PF1600 has a retail price of £2934 + Vat.

For further information: Tel: 01944 768232.



relief, spin, or both?



The unique Jupiter 2000 grinder has it all.

The Jupiter 2000 has the exceptional accuracy of relief grinding and fully automatic spin. It grinds cylinders 'in and out of situ' **and** sharpens both edges of the bottom blades. Unlike other machines, coolant is used on cylinders and bottom blades.

Only the Jupiter 2000 is capable of returning both cylinders and bottom blades to the original manufacturers specification.

Save time, money and workshop space without compromising on performance!



CUTTING EDGE PIONEERS

Ask for a demonstration and see the results for yourself

01207 270316

Delta Works, Hobson Industrial Estate
Burnopfield, Newcastle upon Tyne NE16 6EA
Tel: +44 (0) 1207 270316 Fax: +44 (0) 1207 270312
www.huntergrinders.com
Email: admin@huntergrinders.com



Peter Boyd
SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440

SCOTTISH REGION

Annual Conference, Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline. On Tuesday March 2, 2004 BIGGA Scottish Region will again present their Annual Conference at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline.

For 2004 we have speakers from all sides of the industry coming to Dunfermline to provide topics relevant to everyone.

The speakers include Neil Baldwin, Omega Sciences; David Briggs, Campey Sports; David McLay Kidd, a Golf Course Architect; Rex Kimberly, Terralift and Richard Minton, of Complete Weed Control. From the ranks of the greenkeepers we are delighted to have Ian McMillan MG, Course Manager, Murrayshall Golf Club, and Duncan McGilvray, from Potters Bar Golf Club. All these speakers will provide interesting and varied talks that are relevant to all in greenkeeping.

The Conference Centre at Lauder College is centrally located and has easy access from the motorway. The Centre with its first class facilities is the ideal location for this event. It is hoped that greenkeepers, greens convenors and secretaries will attend.

Application forms will be available in the early part of January 2004 and will be posted to all members in the Scottish Region.

Peter J. Boyd
Regional Administrator.

Central

It seems a bit strange as I am writing this report in early December, it's supposed to be winter time and we are still cutting grass! Are the courses going to get any rest before opening day? I hope all this report reaches you this time as with my skills, my dyslexic computer and a faulty fax I sometimes have problems communicating with HQ.

I know they are not all my problems but that's another story.

Elmwood College in Cupar was the place to be on November 11 when a very successful workshop/seminar was held. Over 40 members took the time to attend and participated in a very interactive meeting with four excellent speakers in Douglas Shearer, from Elmwood College; George Murray, an Employment Consultant; Ian MacMillan, Course Manager at Murrayshall Hotel and Golf Courses, and Stuart Cruickshank Course Manager at Deer Park Golf and Country Club. Our sincere thanks go to everyone who helped to make this a very successful event, which hopefully we can build on for future events.

Congratulations from everyone in the Section go to committee member Ian MacMillan on becoming a grandfather, Ian's daughter, Gaynor, presented him with a lovely granddaughter, Isobel, on November 11. All are doing well and I don't think Ian has come down from Cloud 9 yet.

Congratulations also go to Jimmy Kidd who is leaving Gleneagles after many years and taking up a new position in Barbados. I hope all goes well with you and your family in your new venture. Scotland won't be the same without you Jimmy!

Club 2000 winners in the second half of 2003 were D. Peddie, L. Kennedy, T. Comerford, G. Smith, J. Wallace, G. Butter, B. Irving, B. Cruickshank, M. Baxter and K. Thomson and everyone should have received their cheques by now. At the time of writing I am still waiting for 225 members to purchase or return their tickets. I sent tickets out to 283 members so you can plainly see how many give support to the Section.

Next month I will include the names of everyone who has still to purchase/return their tickets and the following month I will include those who supported this venture.

We extend a warm welcome to one new member this month in Jonathan Pendry from Gleneagles. As usual, hopefully Jonathan will manage to attend some of our future events where he will get the opportunity to meet some of his fellow members. The dates for this year's golf tournaments at Elie and Downfield have yet to be confirmed, but I will get in touch with you all as soon as I have them.

John Crawford



Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
 Tel: 01476 550115



North

Six new members to report this month and they are all from Skibo Castle GC, Christopher Mailley, William Matheson, James Shepherd, Glen Herbertson, James Mcbeath and Campbell Mackay. Gary Gruber, the new Head Greenkeeper at Skibo Castle, is also a member, so we have a full squad from Skibo. Welcome to the Section, lads.

Scotsturf has come and gone again and in speaking to members who made it down, there were quite a few companies who did not exhibit this year, maybe preferring once every two years. But I think everyone who made the effort had a good day.

Harrogate is coming again this month and Peter Boyd has negotiated a very good deal for our Scottish Region of £165 for three nights accommodation in the Moat Hotel and travel to and from Glasgow. Places on this package may well all be taken now, but there are other places to stay if it is necessary to do so.

George Mitchell, from Newmachar GC, was nominated for the LANTRA modern apprenticeship awards for his work on Level 3. George's achievement in attaining this nomination was high praise indeed, and although he was not successful in attaining the top prize, the nomination was a first.

The Patron's Awards for this year went to Hugh Mclatchie, from Peterhead, and Ken Andersen, from Newmachar GC. They recently attended the awards dinner in Stirling, along with the new Secretary, Dale Robertson, and would like to express their thanks to the Patrons for their continued support. They go down to Harrogate as part of their award for supporting the section throughout the year.

Dale is trying to set up an e-mail data-base for all our members, if they can get access to a computer, so as to make it easier and cheaper to contact members of any forthcoming outings etc. Dale's e-mail address is dalengc@hotmail.com. Dale's mobile number is 07711274525.

The outings for next year are for Spring, The Moray Old Course; Lossiemouth, on Thursday, May 27, while the autumn outing is to be at Westhill near Aberdeen in September.

Due to a mix with the reports the November's report was printed for a second time. Apologies for this to our members.

George Aitken, of Peterculter GC, is retiring from greenkeeping. George is a great supporter of BIGGA and was an ever present at outings. I would like to wish George all the best for his retirement on behalf of all the members of our Section. On the subject of older members, it was good to see Donnie Dingwall is still doing well at the ripe old age of 78. Donnie who is a former Head Greenkeeper of Strathpeffer occasionally pops up to make sure the things are being done properly. Also another former Strathpeffer Head man, Robert Hardie, is due to become a father again. So best wishes to young Bob and his family.

If any greenkeeper would like to do a Level 3 in greenkeeping from our Section, could they give me a phone as I am trying to get a group set up in the north area who can maybe do the qualification on a fast track basis over a year. Anyone interested could contact me on 01997 420155.

I would like to wish the members a belated Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and I hope the winter is not too severe
 Iain Gunn



North East

In October at Seahouses GC we had our annual match against the East of Scotland. The match was a closely fought one once again as it turned out the game ended in a draw so the North East Section retained the trophy.

On behalf of both Sections we would like to thank the sponsors, Stewart's of Edinburgh for sponsoring the day and look forward to the return match next year.

Well, as you will have already read by now, Tony McLure and his team from

Whickham GC played in the John Deere Team Classic in November and finished 20 under par. Quite a good score you would think but the winners were a staggering 39 under. However, I'm sure the lads had a memorable time and enjoyed every bit of the challenge.

Well, it's that time of the year again when everyone will be doing their winter jobs spare a thought for those who are doing major jobs with the likes of Tyneside GC and Hexham GC. For those of you who know Tyneside well, next time you drive over the ravine at the 15th hole, notice the difference as they have partially filled it in making it easier to maintain and nowhere near as deep as it was.

Next it's Hexham GC as they are in the process of a redesign on the 18th hole, by dropping the ridge across the latter half of the fairway by a metre to make a flatter landing area plus reshaping the existing bunkers to grass faces. Work in the area is approx. 2500 square metres. Well they might be finished that job around January if they are lucky with the weather.

Anyone else with any news on their winter programme that they want mentioned give me a ring

0191 413 5232 or e-mailat JFroud123@aol.com
 Jimmy Richardson

North Wales

Happy New Year and a warm welcome to North Wales 2004. This month sees our Section Secretary, Andy Campbell, take up his post as Chairman of BIGGA from the current Chairman, George Brown. It will be a busy year for Andy attending all the shows in San Diego, Canada, Norway, Ireland, Italy the list goes on. Not to mention all the Dinner functions. It's going to be tough but I am sure he will cope and do a sterling job promoting the organisation.

Wendy O'Brien, also from Carden Park, has excelled in her newly chosen venture as a guest speaker at educational seminars, Wendy first compiled a revue of her Augusta experience in last year's North Wales seminar (featured in Greenkeeper International) and has since spoken at Cannington and The National Turf grass Conference in Southport. So be quick if you wish to book Wendy for your event as her diary is filling up.

Darren Anderson has attained his HNC in greenkeeping and Peter Sproston will be handed with a Bravery award in February at the Hanover International Hotel from the Fire Brigade for his heroics in saving a motorist from a crash last year.

Dougie Neilson has had a baby boy of 11lb 8oz, which is quite an achievement for a man, and Paul Lowe from Rhuddlan (with his wife) has had a baby girl. Congratulations to you both.

Our Spring seminar will be held once again February 24, at Carden Park, along with training courses in March and April – please contact the committee for details.

Forms for inclusion on to the coach for Harrogate will be in the post second week of January. Please return them ASAP so as not to miss out.

Our Christmas tournament was held at Abergele in December and a big thankyou to all those who took part and made the day a great success. We had just over 60 entrants and we thank Darren Anderson and his team for the fine presentation of the course. The new USGA greens had a good speed on them and the putts took all the breaks. Thanks also to the caterers for the turkey dinner and to the club for the courtesy of the course.

The results are as follows: Members. 1. Allen Lewis, 37pts; 2. John Evans, 36pts; 3. Haydon Jones, 36pts; 4. Rob Myatt, 35pts; 5. Kevin Lewis, 35pts. Guests. 1. Islyn Luke, 35pts; 2. Karl Ashley, 35pts. Trade. 1. Yours Truly, 36pts. The Aggregate Cup for the year was Jeremy Hughes. There were 2 Nearest the Pin Prizes, sponsored by BATgolf.com, and both were won by Rob Myatt, AbergeleGC, and Nearest the Pin, sponsored by Major Owen, won at 5' by Peter Sproston. Thanks also to all the trade Patrons of North Wales for their sponsorship.

I finish with a note to my old friend Bill Lawson. Bill, please note I haven't mentioned pubs or darts this month – Any news or views give me a call.

Home 01925 263394 – Mobile 07778 162162
 e-mail acorn@golf@supanet.com
 Mesen Cymru
 Andrew Acorn



**It is the inner values
that count –
and the external ones.**

The inner value of an Aebi product is created through the long-term, assured customer service. Even the very best of machines can sometimes fail. Then it is a question of how quickly the spare parts are available and the problem is solved.

The external value, the timeless design, the ergonomics, the carefully designed operating convenience and the safety – these are all major concerns for Aebi. This is confirmed not least by the many design and innovation awards. Aebi Burgdorf is a leading company for all-wheel-drive transporters, (steep-slope) implement carriers and multi-purpose single-axle tractors, and is right amongst the leaders in terms of quality and innovation.

Aebi Burgdorf. One for all.



- Aeration
- Biotope
- maintenance
- Composting
- Construction work
- Countryside
- maintenance
- Crane work
- Cross-country
- transport
- Digging
- Disposal of glass
- Edging
- Flail mowing
- Golf course
- maintenance
- Grass collection
- Grassed area
- maintenance
- Hedge cutting
- Irrigation
- Lifting tasks
- Line construction
- Maintenance
- of cableways
- Motor mowing
- Motorway
- maintenance
- Mowing steep slopes
- Multi-lift jobs
- Nature preservation
- Path cleaning
- Pulling a trailer
- Quarry work
- Reclamation
- Replacement
- of street lights
- River bank
- maintenance
- Road maintenance
- Road sweeping
- Roadside
- maintenance
- Rotary mowing
- Salt spreading
- Sand spreading
- Scarification
- Seed sowing
- Ski slope
- maintenance
- Snow brushing
- Snow ploughing
- Snow throwing
- Sports ground
- maintenance
- Sweeping
- Tree maintenance
- Turf maintenance
- Upkeep of grounds
- Vegetation disposal
- Waste disposal
- Weed brushing

**See us on
stand B23
at BTME &
ClubHouse**

Aebi & Co. AG
Farm and Public Works
Equipment
CH-3401 Burgdorf / Switzerland
Phone +41 (0)34 421 61 21
Fax +41 (0)34 421 61 51
www.aebi.com
aebi@aebi.com

Sales Manager U.K.:
John T. Taylor
The Cottage, Five Fields Lane
Retford, Notts DN22 7HQ
Phone 01777 86 07 64
Fax 01777 71 94 49
aebiuk@aol.com

AEBI

North West

How lucky can we get? Each year we have the AGM in December and we also play for the President's Cup and each year we have been blessed with good weather as we did once again on December 4. A turnout of 39 members and trade members enjoyed an excellent day at Wilmslow GC where we had the tee from 10am after a breakfast of bacon baps and coffee. As mentioned, the weather was good, and the course was in great condition as usual, with the greens as fast as during the summer month's. All credit for this goes to Steve Ultram and his dedicated team.

We played a Stableford round and although it is not an easy course (it is a qualifier course for The Open) the scores were good, with Peter Hogan winning the Presidents Cup with 39 points. Peter has picked up most of the prizes from this year's tournaments, so I think somebody will have to noble him next year.

The golf was followed by the AGM which was also attended by Peter Larter, the Northern Region Administrator. Mike Davie, the Section Chairman, stepped down this year after serving for four years as Chairman, and Paul Eddlestone took over as Chairman for the coming year. Mike was presented with a beautiful engraved hip flask to show the Section's appreciation, and I am sure it will be put to good use. The committee opted to carry on for a further year, with the addition of Alan Donlevy making a total of 10 committee members. The committee comprises: Chairman, Paul Eddlestone; Secretary, Bert Cross; Treasurer, Bill Merritt; Mike Davie, Steve Ultram, Chris Sheehan, Paul Walker, Clive Poole, Aidie Holt and Alan Donlevy.

As the meeting was about to close, the Chairman sprung a surprise on me, and I was presented with a magnificent framed picture of the Old Course St Andrews. This was because I have completed 25 plus years on the N/W Section committee. I had not realised I had done that long, but somebody had been doing their homework. I can assure everybody that it is greatly appreciated and is now displayed in pride of place in my home. Many thanks to everybody. I will close now but I am always available for any news or views on: 0151 7245412 or 07761 583387.

Bert Cross

Northern

Too much eating, drinking and merry making? Never mind as BTME is almost here. Yes another one is upon us and I hope to see a lot of you either in the show, at the seminars or in the bars in Harrogate making the week another success for our Association.

As normal, I am writing these notes weeks ahead of the publishing date. In fact I am writing it before the Christmas golf at Elland Golf Club, (you think you're premature!). So, I am unable to report on the goings on at the event but I will tell you all the gory details in February's issue.

In the next month or so I am hoping you will all be receiving the new Fixture and Events list for the coming year. This will include details of our spring lecture and possible dinner dance.

Again can I plead with you all, as you can see, I am struggling for content so any news or views would be appreciated or am I writing this for my own enjoyment?

Please note my new address at the end of these ramblings. I have moved much nearer your Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and President and hope I can now do more drinking of the Black stuff or some Timmy Taylor's with them.

Last, but far from least, I must thank all at BIGGA House, and especially Ken Richardson, on the informative computer training three others and myself received through the Regional Training at a bargain price of £60 for the two days. Again and again I hear people say, "What do I get for my annual subscription?" Well, I am sure if you just took up one of the many days put on by the Association in Autumn and Spring you will have recouped the cost of it. So, if you would like to benefit from the training get in touch with headquarters and ask them if they can run a course in your desired field.

Talk to you all again next month, hope the heads are not too sore after BTME.

To contact me: Laburnham Cottage, Keighley Road, Denholme, Bradford, West Yorks BD13 5LY Tel: 01274 834551 Mobile: 07976876264

Email: Dthackray@aol.com

Dave Thackray

MIDLAND REGION

BB&O

Another year bites the dust, Christmas is over, new resolutions begun, the Atkins diet going strong coupled with the latest nicotine patch fix and we are all ready to rock and roll for 2004.

The final of the Regional Rigby Taylor Team Knockout has now been played with a 3 and 2 win favouring the Tartan duo Ross Wilson, Colin Hutt, Parasampia GC and magnanimous in defeat Simon Robinson, Alistair Higgs, Calcott Park GC. This event was greatly enjoyed by all who participated and a vote of thanks must go to the organisers.

On a mild, wintry morning in November, the BB&O gathered for its annual Turkey Trot at Frilford Heath GC. Sixteen teams of three with best two counting was the format, which was well represented from the three counties, after a low calorie bacon roll and coffee, a close fought battle commenced on the red course (a fine example in a Heathland setting). The course was very well prepared and in excellent condition due to Course Manager, Sid Arrowsmith, at the helm with his band of merry men, working wonders over the last year in maintaining such a fine golf course. A very big thank you to Sid and all the lads. The results were as follows: 1. Team Henley, Mitch Stewart, Dave Parish, Mike Johnson, 84 pts; 2. Team Flackwell Heath, Steve Gardner, Tony Simpson, John Rouse, 83 pts; 3. Team Hinksey Heights, Dave Shepard, Adam Thompson, Craig Marsh, 81 pts.

Thank you to Frilford Heath GC and Peter Dier, Vice Captain, for making us all very welcome and also for the gastronomic delights and facilities available to us on the day.

Sponsors for the day were Avoncrop Amenity with Colin White in attendance dishing out the well-earned prizes between the 3 teams. We thank you for your continued support. It was nice to see a few new faces on the day and we hope to see many more of you at our events in 2004.

Shot of the day must go to Jason Payne, Burnham Beeches, whose tee shot on the 9th, hit the trees, ricochet out, bounced on the roof of Carl Small's buggy putting his pacemaker on red alert, and landing in Nathan Bond's (the group in front) golf bag, never to see the light of day again.

Congratulations to Leon Brant, from Datchet GC, who is suffering from sleep deprivation with a big smile on his face as his wife has just given birth to a new baby boy, Jack. We all wish him and his new-born family the very best.

Finally a special mention to David Haskell Craig who has been our Section Secretary and stalwart at our golf days over the last few years, organising and making sure we all had a superb day out, David is leaving Maidenhead GC in the capable hands of Chris Mitchell, his Deputy, and emigrating to Australia. As you are reading this, he will probably be sunning himself and sticking another shrimp on the barbie in Sydney Harbour, just as we prepare ourselves for the whirlwind of activity at Harrogate. We wish the "Pommie David" (his new nickname) and family the very best success for the future down under.

Happy New Year to you all.

Mark Day

Midland

Hope all had an excellent Christmas, and trust too much drink was not taken. A respected University Professor recently reminded me that: "One knows when one has drunk too much, as one shall be found lying on the floor holding on for dear life, as if one lets go, one should surely fall off!". What a delicious quote.

Last month I was fortunate enough to have been selected for interview with mind to a position as a Head Greenkeeper. I consider myself knowledgeable and experienced within greenkeeping, and other related fields. However, at interview I found myself somewhat nervous and indeed unable to string together a coherent sentence despite the greatest efforts of the kind interviewers. Thankfully, Andy Smith has organised an "Effective Communication" two day course to be held at Shirley Golf Club on 16 & 17 March at a cost of £60 plus VAT. This will obviously be specifically dealing with the many differing aspects of communication from the greenkeepers' point of view. To book your place please call either Andy on: 07977 145091, or myself

15 MINUTES FLOOR-TO-FLOOR EXPRESS DUAL



Fast Simple Accurate

TEST DRIVE A DUAL



CALL 01788 811600

SHARPER SOLUTIONS...with BERNHARD

www.bernhard.co.uk