

NEW PRODUCTS

POND MATS INTRODUCED TO THE UK

AquaMats, a high performance, environmentally friendly aquatic technology, has been launch in the UK.

AquaMats significantly reduce nitrite and ammonia stress on any aquatic system by supplementing the existing biofiltration.

With a 20 year proven track record in the US and Belgium, AquaMats are a revolutionary line of patented aquatic technology products that increase the surface area of aquatic habitats, resulting in a number of benefits to pond ecosystems, especially during the variable seasons of autumn and spring when nitrate levels fluctuate.

AquaMats resemble aquatic grass in appearance and combine an aquatic habitat, in situ biofiltration and supplemental natural food production all in the same unique product. They are designed for a wide range of aquatic

species and environments and complement existing filtration systems.

There are two versions, full size AquaMats for larger ponds (500 gallons and up) and AquaMats Minis for ornamental ponds, water gardens and koi ponds.

AquaMats have bioengineered surfaces that radically increase the beneficial biological activity of ornamental ponds and water gardens. They are environmentally friendly, manufactured from food-grade polymers with no binders or phthalates, which means no harmful chemicals are leached into the water.

AquaMats don't require cleaning as they are cleaned by the 'grazing' of pond fish (although they can be hand cleaned at the pond side).

At the end of their useful life, they are completely recyclable.

For further information Tel: 0117 9088841

LOW COST WEATHER STATION



With efficient water management being a vital issue for greenkeepers currently, manufacturer of irrigation equipment Rain Bird will reveal their latest Weather Station WS PRO LT at BTME.

"This weather station is very affordable allowing all golf clubs to eliminate unnecessary watering," says Victor Jamieson, Regional Manager for Northern Europe. "Costs can be reduced dramatically, especially where mains water is used either solely or as a back-up."

Designed to be used with Rain Bird central control systems the evapotranspiration (ET) rates

are automatically downloaded from the environmental data supplied by the weather station. Their full sensor array provides accurate measurements of air temperature, wind speed, solar radiation, wind direction, relative humidity, rainfall and barometric pressure.

When an irrigation program is run off ET, having taken into consideration any rainfall the central automatically calculates new station run times to apply only the amount of water lost through evaporation and transpiration.

With changing weather patterns, data reports can be generated to show current and past weather conditions by the hour, day, week, month or year.

For further information Tel: 01273 891326

NEW GREENTEC GRANULE

Headland have launched a new Greentec fine turf fertiliser, which will be on show at BTME.

A homogenous granule (average 1mm diameter), the new formulation of 6+5+18 is designed to replace the existing 6+4+12 product, and, like the rest of the Greentec range, contains all the turf nutrients in one granule, rather than as a blend of individual particles. The result is more uniform coverage across fine turf surfaces.

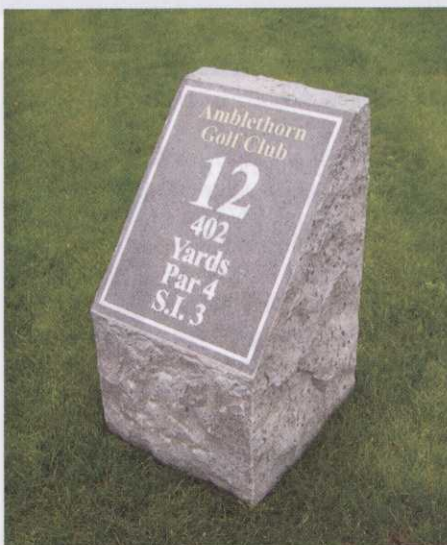
The product's increased potassium content aids winter hardiness, helping reduce stress and the likelihood of disease, as well as improving turf vigour and colour. The inclusion of potassium nitrate means that Greentec 6+5+18 is lower in sulphur, which contributes to "Black Layer" in anaerobic soils.

Potassium nitrate also provides an immediately available source

of nitrogen giving a plant response even under cooler temperatures. For this reason, the new Greentec 6+5+18 is not only ideal as an autumn feed, but can also be applied in early spring.

Designed for all fine turf areas, golf and bowling greens, as well as croquet lawns, Greentec 6+5+18 can also be applied to golf tees, surrounds and approaches plus other close cut turf.

The product's 4% iron and 1% magnesium aids leaf hardness and improves winter colour. For more information Tel: 01223 597834



GOLF TEE SIGNS UNVEIL NEW RANGE

Golf Tee Signs will be launching a number of new products at BTME 2005 including, The Lakes Range, a selection of unique 'Granite only' Tee Signs, and new additions to the Sherwood Range of Hardwood posts and frames.

An addition to the Golf Tee Signs range of Golf Course signage is The Lakes range of Granite Tee signs, consisting of three new products.

The Kendal, an upright Granite boulder, The Keswick, a round Granite boulder, and The Askam, an angled Granite pedestal. These new signs are produced entirely from natural Granite and bring a new meaning to the phrase 'maintenance free signage'.

The new signs blend in naturally with their environment, while withstanding the harshest

weather conditions, to become an integral part of the surrounding landscape.

They will be of particular interest to golf courses that are located in exposed areas and/or in coastal regions. Another benefit, particularly to those courses that get the odd un-welcome visitor, is that they are vandal and theft resistant.

Also on display will be the latest new products which have been added to the Sherwood Range, using the finest quality hardwood. These include Twin and Links posts with granite plates, and a new range of premier outdoor hardwood furniture featuring chairs and tables with hexagonal Granite inserts showing the Club's logo.

For further information Tel: 01422 345990



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&



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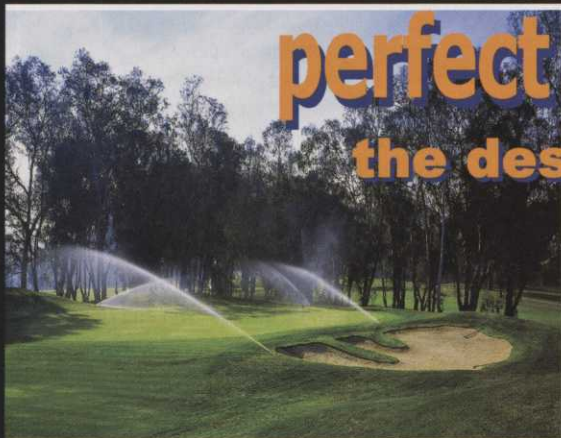
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The AFT Sandbander quickly installs 25mm wide drainage slits, filling them at the same time with consolidated sand up to a depth of 250mm. The unique blade design and fast oscillation create minimal heave and permit even moist sand to be used.

The machine is the ideal tool to quickly drain excess surface water to free draining subsoil or existing drainage system. Using sand rather than gravel ensures that essential moisture levels are retained in the root zones and that no harmful spills can damage mowers or players.

Designed for tractors from 20HP, it can safely work on sensitive areas like golf greens. If required the Sandbander can also be used with gravel or similar backfilling materials.

For further information Tel: 01787 311811



KRISTAL KLEAR APPROACH TO CLEAN WATER

Whether recreational or functional, watercourses have great potential to provide valuable wildlife and visual features.

A constant problem encountered with regard to their management is an effective method of maintaining a healthy and diverse aquatic environment, focusing on algae-free surfaces and control of anaerobic sub-surface conditions.

In the majority of cases a combination of minimal aeration and a build up of de-oxygenating organic sediment results in a stagnant, lifeless water feature. Kristal Klear aerators, created by Trevor Smith Golf Consultancy, work on the basic principle of facilitating a sustainable source of oxygen within the entire watercourse.

Regardless of the size and depth of the feature, Kristal Klear systems can be tailor made to your precise requirements. A feature of the Kristal Klear system is that it can be run off your existing

irrigation system, or stand alone with its own integrated pump.

More than ever it is imperative to promote environmentally responsible management techniques. They are pioneering a move away from short term chemical solutions that treat only the symptoms, by targeting the underlying cause of most water management issues in a way that is environmentally accountable.

The Kristal Klear diffusion aeration system combines pressurised water with oxygen delivered at the lake bottom creating large volumes of air bubbles, which rise bringing the bottom water to the surface.

The diffusers are especially designed to produce bubbles that circulate water to the surface as it picks up oxygen. The diffuser is placed on the bottom of the pond (preferably in the deepest water).

For further information Tel: 01202 824966

TURGOR TOUGHENS TURF

Following rigorous trials on some of the world's busiest winter sports pitches, Floratine have launch Turgor, the company's new protective silicon product, onto the golf market.

Aimed specifically at Creeping Bent greens grasses, Turgor increases the plant's ability to withstand wear, hastens recovery, and reduces pitch marks and the likelihood of devoting.

David Snowden, European Technical Manager for the company, says that Turgor is the only form of silicon that is absorbed through the leaf, and therefore mobile throughout the plant, rather than coating the surface.

"For this reason, Turgor strengthens the plant from the inside," he explains, "not only enabling it to withstand the wear and tear of play, but also rendering the sward less prone to disease."

"We've tested the product at Rasunda, Sweden's National Stadium during the football season, and conditions don't get much tougher than that."

Turgor comes in 2 x 10 litre cans, and for peak protection should be applied every one to two weeks during the growing season. The alternative is to apply two to three days before special events or tournaments. For further information Tel: 01765 658021

HUNTER GRINDERS LOOK TO THE STARS

The Jupiter ATI Relief/Spin Grinder with fully integrated guarding system will be on display at BTME 2005.

The Jupiter ATI combines the solid stability of a cast iron bed, with precision relief grinding for accuracy second to none. The ATI is fully automatic, using a computer programme that allows the operator to leave the grinder unattended while other tasks are completed.

The fully integrated guard is fitted with micro switches which instantly shut off the machine if any of the guard panels are removed.

Speed is often mentioned when looking at short term gains and when set up the ATI will spin grind as quickly as any other machine. However, the long term benefits of having a Hunter Grinder come into play once the mower units are back on the course.

The Jupiter ATI will return all cylinders and bottom blades back to the manufacturer's specification and keep them on cut for up to four times longer than any other method of grinding.

For further information Tel: 01207 270316



Winter maintenance – getting

James de Havilland provides some excellent advice on making the most of your winter maintenance.

Late autumn will see a flurry of mail from dealers advising of their special out of season service deals. Have your mowers and other items of kit serviced during the winter months and save money.

On the surface, this may seem like a little bit of flannel, but if you are not taking advantage of out of season service deals, you are missing out.

Although modern equipment may well be reliable and boost productivity, it still needs looking after. Routine servicing is one thing, and possibly it may remain within the scope of an in-house workshop. But there are some items of kit that can make it difficult to stray from filter and oil changes. Anything else may need the services of a third party.

This is not because equipment, such as a modern fairway mower, is harder to work on. It is more to do with the increasing use of electronics and advanced engine management systems. In many cases, diagnostic checks and software tweaks can only be carried out by trained dealer personnel.

Of course this does not mean it is time to out source all machinery maintenance to equipment suppliers. Although it is tempting to suggest a good winter service and mid-season check will be enough to see a mower go through a season, the reality is somewhat different.

Modern equipment will have to earn its keep on a golf course, and as a result it may well need more care than fixed service intervals can offer. The key is to get a balance, exploiting dealer facilities when they are at their least expensive and using in-house facilities as much as possible to reduce overall costs.

With a fairway mower as an example, routine greasing and keeping the reels good and sharp are obvious priorities. Add a regime that includes cleaning after every use, with a good clean once a week. It is surprising how reliability can be increased when a strict cleaning programme is introduced.

This is not because a clean machine suddenly becomes more reliable. It is simply because routine cleaning helps workshop personnel spot potential problems. The odd loose nut, chafing hose or weeping coupling can go unnoticed if buried under a coating of dried on clippings.


So what has this got to do with winter maintenance? In itself, not a great deal. But what is clear is that planned maintenance is considerably cheaper than ad-hoc repairs. So, only the bravest Course Manager would forgo at least some in-house workshop facilities.

Relying on a third party for every element of machinery repair and maintenance is a risk too far. The key is getting the balance right. Having high capital cost equipment, such as ride-on mowers, given a complete winter service by the supplying dealer makes a great deal of sense.

Maintenance deals are of course increasingly wrapped into purchasing packages and these can make a great deal of sense when it comes to the care of more complex kit, but only if the true costs are properly thought through.

In some instances, it can pay to negotiate a separate maintenance package with a dealer supplying certain bits of kit, such as mowers. Out of season service deals sometimes make a 'bolt-on' service package better than one wrapped into a full lease hire, or similar, purchase plan. On-site mid-season visits to give a mower a service are also worth building into a deal.

Although it is tempting to save a few pounds by cutting a few corners on servicing, well maintained kit tends to be trouble free. For some,



Before signing on the dotted line for a new item of critical kit, take the time to visit the supplying dealer's workshop and parts store. The best tees, greens and fairway mowers are only as good as the people who look after them.

however, this talk of third party servicing is seen as something of a retrograde step. Being able to carry out all routine servicing in-house can save time and money, particularly where trained workshop personnel 'know' the demands placed on a given item of kit.

A modern ride-on fairway mower remains a complex item of equipment, but its servicing needs will not necessarily tax the skills of a fitter who has been working on this type of mower for years. The point, however, is that the number of golf clubs that can support workshop personnel with the necessary experience to look after more advanced kit is limited.

As manufacturers and supplying dealers are increasingly linking in a maintenance package to various sales initiatives, it also follows that for many clubs the need to justify full time workshop personnel also diminishes.

For both manufacturers and dealers it makes sound business sense to ensure a given item of kit is serviced using OEM replacement parts, and it is for this reason that many new equipment sales often come linked to attractive maintenance packages.

the best deal on equipment



A good service contract will include mid-season checks. In-house workshop staff should be involved when considering maintenance packages. The key is getting a good balance between in-house routine maintenance and dealer servicing.



Warranties

Of equal importance, there is a need to ensure equipment is serviced during its warranty period. It is difficult for warranty claims to be handled sympathetically when there is no record of the machine having been serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

This is of increasing significance as more and more equipment comes with long original or extended warranty schemes.

The issue of warranty claim validation can make in-house servicing regimes a problem. If a hydraulic motor fails on a mower within its warranty period, the end user would expect it to be replaced without charge.

The supplying dealer, however, could quite legitimately reject the claim if they have not been responsible for the mower's maintenance. Why should they, or more relevantly the manufacturer, allow a claim when both parties have no way of knowing servicing has been carried out to the right standard and to schedule?

Supplying dealers in the past would often deal with warranty claims on 'self-serviced' equipment sympathetically, in many cases standing the

cost of repairs of at least part of a manufacturer refused claim. Such are the tight margins under which many dealerships now operate, however, that such largess is increasingly difficult to sustain.

Fixed costs

It is the need to work to fixed costs, however, which can make 'dealer' servicing attractive. As it is now common practice to offer a maintenance package with high capital cost equipment, it follows that more operations will take up what is offered.

As a given package will typically span the period over which the finance is to be spread, a golf club will know in advance what maintenance costs are going to be over a given period. Barring accident, equipment costing is considerably easier if a pre-priced maintenance package is built in.

For these packages to offer good value for money, it will depend upon how well the terms are worked out between the parties involved. In some cases early schemes got the costs wrong, with some manufactures underestimating the level of work some machines would do in a season and vice versa.

Current schemes remain competitively priced as they can help sweeten a purchasing decision. In fact buying an item of new kit without looking at what can be included in terms of maintenance is, at best, short sighted.

But make sure you know what you are getting. A deal that offers the back-up support of a loan machine if a critical item of kit is taken out of action is well worth looking at. The key is to shop around and discuss specific needs with suppliers.

It is all well and good talking about how all inclusive purchase schemes are offered, but for any maintenance initiative to work all parties involved need to know what is involved.

In some instances, a dealer will allow certain tasks, such as routine oil changes, to be carried out in-house. They will supply the relevant filters and oils to the customer so they can change the fluids themselves. This can help reduce package costs.

More commonly, the dealer will offer a mid-season machine check, this entailing an on-site visit that could see the machine having the fluids and filters changed plus possible adjustment to drive belts etc. A full service is pre-arranged for a period out of season.

The costs are all budgeted for beforehand, so the end user is not going to be presented with a large and unexpected service bill.

As we enter a period where future cost planning is of growing importance, fixed service cost schemes start to become increasingly attractive. But this is not to suggest it is time to close in-house workshops either.

Once these facilities are lost, they are expensive and difficult to re-establish. The key is to combine the two to ensure equipment spends more time earning its keep and less time in the workshop.

A good maintenance package should offer:

- Planned regular maintenance that satisfies manufacturer warranty requirements.
- Enhanced residual values due to service history.
- Fixed servicing costs.

In-house workshops offer:

- On site cover for breakdowns.
- Maintenance schedules to match specific machine use.
- In-house modifications to meet course specific needs.
- Mechanical expertise.



News from the Chief Executive

Plans for BTME & ClubHouse progress with the event approaching at an alarming rate. It seems no time at all since it was April and we were planning the education programme and discussing our marketing strategy with the steering committee.

In June we agreed to host the annual International Summit on Friday January 21 and delegate response to this has been excellent. Demand for space is encouraging, with several exhibitors coming to the show for the first time and others looking to expand their space. Bookings for the extended workshop and seminar packages on offer exceed numbers at the corresponding time last year and the Association feels that it is heading in the right direction.

The event, which provides a vital source of income for the Association, continues to grow as we dedicate more resources and invest more and more time and money in it, in an attempt to secure its future well being.

The management team at Aldwark is conscious that the exhibition is not just about making money for BIGGA or providing subsidised education for its members. It has to work as a showcase for the industry where traditional golf course equipment, machinery and maintenance products can be successfully marketed alongside innovative products to an increasingly discerning buyer.

A buyer who is expected to produce a higher and higher standard of facility while at the same time seeing his or her budget being constantly put under pressure. Latterly the rumblings on the horizon by some of the trade regarding the cost of supporting principally two shows, Saltex and our own, has become a black cloud over the future of both these events. Many of the major machinery manufacturers have indicated they can no longer justify exhibiting at both shows on an annual basis.

Clearly this is cause for concern and we must work with the exhibitors to try to resolve the financial pressures that they are also suffering. The Sales and Marketing staff at these companies are not exempt from the same budgetary restrictions that many Course Managers, Golf Club Secretaries and Chairmen of Green experience.

How we will resolve the matter remains to be seen. Many exhibitors are adamant that they would support an annual show at Harrogate but the logistics of a compromise are difficult to work out. I am sure it will be the subject of much discussion at Harrogate and for some time into 2005. There is one major factor in the whole equation that must not be overlooked and that is the visitor.

All too often we see the same faces at Harrogate, these are the dedicated keen members who take a pride in being a part of what has grown to be a key organisation in the world of golf. What do we have to do to get your colleagues along, if only for a day? Perhaps someone might like to respond via the bulletin board or e-mail me, at john@bigga.co.uk, Sensible suggestions only please!

At a time when all involved in the industry are working more closely together than ever before the clock is in danger of being turned back through lack of funding.

In the past the trade have been very supportive of the Association and this must neither be overlooked nor taken for granted and much of BIGGA's progress and development would not have been possible but for their help. I hope that the excellent working relationship that exists between the trade and the Association can result in a solution being found that favours all parties.

On a more positive note, I would like to congratulate Scott MacCallum on winning the 'Writing' category in the recent Communications in Business annual competition for journalists.

Finally, I wish everyone a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible during 2005.

John Pemberton



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

SCOTTISH REGION

Annual Conference, Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline.

On Tuesday March 1 2005 BIGGA Scottish Region returns once more to the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, for their Annual Conference.

This year the Scottish Region have speakers from all sides of the industry coming to Dunfermline to provide interesting and relevant topics, which should be of interest to everyone in greenkeeping.

From the ranks of the greenkeepers we have Frank Ainsworth, Course Manager, Hilton Templepatrick GC, and Kenny MacKay, Senior Course Manager, Marriott UK. Other speakers include Jay Dobson, PSD Agronomy, Neil Baldwin, Amega Sciences, Douglas Shearer, Head of Greenkeeping & Horticulture, Elmwood College and Louise Hollingworth, from WRAP.

All the speakers have confirmed their attendance and full details and application forms will be available in the early part of January 2005 and will be posted to all members in the Scottish Region.

The Conference Centre at Lauder College is centrally located and has easy access from the motorway.

Peter J. Boyd Regional Administrator

NORTHERN REGION

Northern

I have to start the year on a sad note with the news of the sudden death of Telford Jarvis. Telford was a regular attendee at all Northern Section golf events and will be very much missed by all. At the Golf Day in December the proceeds of the raffle, amounting to £200, were donated to Telford's family on behalf of all at the Northern Section. I have been asked to pass on a thank you message to everyone who donated on behalf of Telford's wife, Lisa, and son, Roman.

There was a fantastic turnout for the Christmas golf day on December 2, at Crow Nest Golf Club. Yet again we had a great day, and for a refreshing change the weather was fine and dry. The format on the day was a Texas Scramble with eight teams comprising of four players taking part. The winners on the day were Mel Guy, Henry Bechelet, Adrian Hollroyd and Steve Heaton (I know, I couldn't believe that Steve won either). The golf was followed by an excellent meal and a few light liquid refreshments. A massive thanks must go to Rob Gee, his staff and everybody at Crow Nest for the superb course, meal and hospitality.

After the golf the 'rabble' was let loose in Halifax which turned out to be yet another fantastic night and I'm pleased to inform you that the night ended in just one arrest, but no names will be mentioned!

With Christmas out of the way (hope Santa brought you all that you asked for) it's time to wish you all the very best for 2005, I hope it's a successful greenkeeping year for you all. Next month I'll bring you the details for the spring tournament, which we are currently arranging.

Don't forget BTME 2005, 18-20 January.

Adam Speight 07739319060 - 01274 638366

North Wales

Happy New Year and a warm welcome to the 2005 season for the North Wales Section. Firstly from Royal St David's GC the Kerry bros would like to thank Andy Campbell MG on their recent visit to Carden Park and for the hospitality shown to them. Secondly an apology to Richard Shields who won the Bromborough Autumn Tournament Best Gross with a reported 80 was in fact a 78.

Which brings me to the results from our Christmas Tournament, held at the Prestatyn Links GC, with its ever so cleverly repaired greens from the spate of direct vandalism earlier this year. They are as follows: Greenkeepers. 1. Craig Wheeler, Frodsham GC, 42 pts; 2. Alan Kelsall, Portal GC, 40pts; 3. Andy Peel, Bull Bay GC, 40pts; 4. Brian Taylor, Sandiway GC, 39pts; and with local knowledge, 5. Dave Parry, Prestatyn GC, 39pts. Guests. 1. Islyn Luke, also Prestatyn GC; 2. Paul Lowe, Rhuddlan GC. Two Nearest the Pin prizes, sponsored by BATgolf, went to Andy Peel, 60 inches on the 6th, and Dave Parry, 52" on the 11th. The trade trophy was Dave Austin, from Rigby Taylor, 41pts and the Aggregate trophy for the year went to Alun Lewis, Llanynymech.

A total of 76 players took part and our thanks go to Dave Parry and his team for presenting the course in top condition, for the time of year, to the caterers and the bar staff, for our turkey meal, and the committee, for the courtesy of the course, also to the patrons of the North Wales Section, for their continued support. Special thanks also to TACIT for buying everyone a bacon butty and finally to Stuart Yarwood, who collected just under £140 from the raffle with his unique approach selling the raffle tickets, "£3 for 3 strips," instead of the usual £1 per strip!

We welcome Carl Crocher, from Caldly GC, on to the committee, Carl, who was associated with his former Section in Kent, will help out with all the issues covering North Wales, and one item we discussed was sorting out a race night out at the Chester racecourse, including a meal for later on this year.

Some dates for your calendar this year are: Jan 18 - 20, BTME Harrogate; Feb 22, Spring combined seminar, at Mere G&CC; April 5, North Wales Vs North West, at Wilmslow GC, give us a call if you would like to play; May 25, Spring Tournament, at Upton by Chester GC; July 14 - 17, Open Championship at St Andrews; July/Aug, will



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SOUTH WEST AND WALES
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be the Golf Management Trophy, date TBC; October 4 is at Eaton GC, for autumn, and the Christmas is at Rhuddlan GC in December (7th maybe). If you remember last time rain stopped play on the 12th, so it will be nice to go back and finish the course.

Amenity Technology have again sponsored the coach for BTME and your forms for pick up points, etc will be in the post shortly. Also the Amtec 'do' has changed venues this year and will be on the Tuesday night, 18, 5 – 7 pm, in Wetherspoons in the town. If anyone requires details of the coach or of the show please give us a call.

Look forward to seeing you up in Harrogate. Ps. If you are thinking of visiting the GCSAA, Orlando, in February the pound – dollar rate is really good at the moment, and it might never be cheaper to go, than now!

Mesen Cymru Andrew Acorn – acorn@golf@supanet.com

MIDLAND REGION

East Midland

This year's AGM was held at Rushcliffe GC, on Thursday November 11, on a dry bright autumn day. The event was well supported with 13 teams forming a three man Texas Scramble format. The winning score came from Tim Bloodworth, Ian Needham and Frank Kempster, with a Nett score of 58.4. In second place were Phil Reffin, Simon Brown and Stuart Raybould, with a Nett score of 60.3. Nearest the Pin was won by Ian Needham, with Ryun Holden taking the prize for the Longest Drive. Our thanks should go to all at Rushcliffe GC for allowing us courtesy of their course and special thanks should be extended to Kevin James and his staff for a really great golf course. Finally a thank you should be extended to Vitax for sponsoring the prize table.

Onto the Section AGM, the following were voted into office by the members: Chairman - Frank Kempster, Vice Chairman and Secretary - Antony Bindley, Treasurer - Richard Barker, additional members of the management committee, Stuart Raybould, Tim Allard, Kevin Kinzer, Ian Needham, Adi Porter and Gavin Robson.

Also on behalf of the Section I would like to take this opportunity to thank David James and Jamie Bedford, who have now finished their term as committee members, for their sterling support to the Section throughout the last two years.

Antony Bindley

Midland

As I sit here compiling my usual dross, with hands stained, a rather vibrant blue from pricking Sloes so as to convert Poteen into that wonderful Irish liquor Sloe Gin (it makes a change from them being blue from spray indicator). The Sloe Gin flavour of last year's batch reminds me of playing a spring event some years ago at Harborne GC. During the front nine I bumped into the Reverend Trafford, he offered me a sip from his hipflask, which contained the said beverage. Following this all too small but potent refreshment, I found my legs somewhat unwilling. What a character! Our profession has, and still is deliciously full of them. Please let me know about yours?

Our Autumn Tournament was held on October 22 at that exquisite venue known as Hawkstone Park Golf Club. Now imagine moving into a new challenge and finding that your new club is, in two weeks, to host one of the largest BIGGA Section events. This being the first task presented to Paul Hyde, Course Manager, who has obviously very recently moved into our Section from the North West (Mere G&CC). Paul, with the support of the fine established greenkeeping team provided a course that was not only a joy to play, but also the standard presented enhanced one of the most interestingly visual courses we have had the pleasure to play. From us all very well done gentlemen. Also thanks to the catering team for a superb meal. Furthermore, thanks to the Captain, Mr Tony Harrop, for making us so welcome and for his eloquent after dinner speech. Our thanks indeed Mr Captain.

The results of the day were: Best Gross. M. Hughes. Best Nett. 1. A. Dalton; 2. E. Stant; 3. D. Gibbons; 4. M. Hughes; 5. D. Fellows; 6. P. Rainsford. Our thanks to R. Jones, of Oakleys Ground Care, for the main prize table. Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive went to E. Stant and M. Grestly respectively, our thanks to WWB Minerals.

It gives me great pleasure in welcoming five new members this month. Robert Jones, of Enville GC, Neville Tapp, Ben Essam, Robert Coppack and Daniel Rowe, all from The Warwickshire.

Now for the jammy berks, I talk about the finalists of the Scotts Doubles, of which was played at Wentworth on the West Course, "as you do". The finalists being P. Woodham and E. Stant versus T. Cheese and P. Nixon. The victors being Woodham and Stant. However, all must be considered as winners. Our thanks to Wentworth Golf Club and, of course, Chris Kennedy. I hope that Scotts shall continue to organise and support this great competition. What a wonderful opportunity to play one of the best parkland courses within the UK. How can you not enter with such a prize on offer?

To finish, an admission. I have in the past stated that I do not find links courses appealing, and much prefer parkland tracks. How naive of me. We were lucky enough to hold our Christmas Tournament at Hoylake GC. I've never enjoyed playing golf as much, such was also iterated by the rest of the field. Our thanks to Royal Liverpool and, of course, the splendid greenkeeping team, as headed by Mr D. Green. Words fail me gentlemen, but wow and thanks will have to suffice. Derek was unable to join us as he was away in a warmer climate driving steam trains. I guess he resembled a pander on his return.

The results of the day were: 1. D. Fellows and K. Kinzer; 2. A. Corn and S. McDade; 3. Terry Cheese and R. Thomas; 4. P. Nixon and M. Gash; 5. E. Stant and P. Richmond. Our thanks to Mark Chamberlain, of Tacit, for the great prize table, "hic". Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive was won by D. Fellows and R. Thwaites respectively. Our thanks to J. Skelton, of WBB Minerals, for their kind sponsorship.

Wishing us all a very successful and happy New Year.

Sean McDade

BB&O

Once again with the festive season over, Turkey sandwiches still in the lunchbox with the odd mince pie that has survived intact into the New Year, not forgetting the new South Beach Diet and Silk Cut patches to help give up the dreaded weed, with all this we have finished off 2004 with a bang, and look forward to another prosperous and challenging 2005 in the Chinese year of the Rooster.

On October 12, the BBO held a clay pigeon shooting competition at West London Shooting Grounds. The good, the bad and the ugly turned up with guns blazing and filled the West London air with the smell of gun smoke. After a practice session, three shooting disciplines were chosen and the best number of clays broken out of 25 would test the Beretta's and Browning guns to the limit as 34 budding John Wayne's blazed away (some for the first time) under the tuition of qualified instructors.

Jon Beck's burger bar stood up well in the wind and rain as he served up half pounders to quell our appetite. Thanks go to sponsors Rigby Taylor, Sherriff Amenity, Tacit and Gem for the prizes. The top gun of the day was Ray Roberts with a 21 point victory over Steve Gardner in second place with third prize going to Mervin Downing followed by Lee Robinson in fourth place. Gary Bateman, from The Buckinghamshire, picked up a prize for managing to miss most of the clays.

Next it was off to the home of the Tartan Terminator and Japanese Gardens, in Newbury, for our Annual General Meeting and Turkey Trot, at Donnington Grove Golf Club. All 64 of the good, the bad and the ugly turned up to battle it out with a Texas Scramble format, followed by a roast dinner in the exquisite dining rooms of Donnington Grove GC.

Results were as follows: Steve Garne, from Flackwell Heath GC, feathered a middle iron for Nearest the Pin and Mike Johnson, from Henley GC, jammed straightest drive on the 18th. Mike and his team then took first place with a convincing 56.9.

Second place went to Flackwell Heath GC, with 58, and the Tartan Team, from Donnington Grove GC, managing a well deserved third place with 59. A big thank you to Coreen Wilson for co-ordinating this excellent venue and Donnington Grove GC for providing the Section with fantastic facilities and the courtesy of the course. Thanks too to Roscoe and his team for ensuring preparation of the course, which was first class.

Avoncrop were the main sponsors for the day and Gary Ogilvie presented the prizes in the absence of Colin White, we wish Colin a speedy recovery, back to work, back on the road and back at all our golf days. Thank you to all our sponsors throughout the year, we have had great support from the trade, which have included Scotts, Am-Tech, Sherriff, Avoncrop, Tacit, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Turner Groundcare, Ely and Gem Professional.

The Annual General Meeting followed and Sid Arrowsmith was voted on as the new Chairman for the Section, followed by John Scoones (Secretary), Mitch Stewart (Treasurer), Vince Riches (Handicap Secretary) and Peter Smith, Frank Booth, Alistair Higgs and Gareth Acteson as committee members and yours truly as the scribe for another year. Wishing you a fantastic New Year!

Mark Day

Mid Anglia

Greetings readers, here's the latest from the buzzing Mid Anglia Section HQ. December 9 saw 88 of us take on the course at Chesfield Downs for the annual Texas Scramble. A great day was had by everyone and many thanks must go to Course Manager, Ed O'Hanlon, and his team for preparing the course to a high standard and for ordering the weather, as the sun came out.

We all sat down to a sumptuous Christmas dinner, served up by the friendly catering staff, so a big thank you goes out to all at Chesfield Downs for making our day enjoyable. Here is the day's results: 1. G. Knight, B. Cox, M. Towler, D. Martin; 2. J. Bondfield, D. Spencer, A. Copland, D. Mugford; 3. M. Read, J. Moorhouse, J. Farrel, L. Cant. Nearest the Pin. J. Bondfield John Chapman walked away with the Player of the Year Award 2004, as well as a few goodies, so well done Johnny!

Our whole day was gratefully sponsored by Avoncrop and was represented by Barry McCloskey, who did a fine job handing out the prizes. Sadly, Barry had news of a long time friend of the Section, Colin "Chalky" White, who is currently very ill. All of us send our best wishes to Colin and hope for a speedy recovery.

Just a couple more things, Gary Carter has left Letchworth to go to Kolven Golf Club, good luck to him and congrats to Gavin Simkins who gave birth to a new born son (well that's not strictly true, Gavin's wife gave birth and did all the hard work).

That's about it for this month, two things to remember guys (and gals), don't eat yellow snow and, as a great philosopher once said, "He who dares . . . wins! Rodgers!"

Bob Butfoy

SOUTH EAST

Surrey

December 6 and only a handful of frosts. The grass is still growing and those winter jobs in the warm shed that used to come with regularity must wait for the cold spell that Michael Fish, if he hadn't retired, would surely have predicted.

Dave Wyborn is still in his shorts so it must be global warming and by the year 2050 USGA greens will be the norm even in Scotland. "Rubbish," I hear you say and, as I fully agree, I'll get on with my usual report from around Surrey.

Jessica Arnold, wife of Steve, from Redhill & Reigate GC, has broken her ankle and Steve, full of sympathy for his wife and a hatred for washing, ironing and housework, anxiously awaits her early recovery. Another Steve, this one from Silvermere GC, is the proud father of his first child, Kai Cooper, 7lbs. 3ozs. His wife, Rayne, who has experience of looking after her husband, has found that having another baby in the family will be no problem. Congratulations also to David Murdoch MG, of Liphook GC, and his partner, Debbie, who have had a little baby girl, 9lbs. 2ozs. Lauren.

The Cooper family now gets another mention as we congratulate that well known Kingswood greenkeeper, Ken, who was 60 in December. Paul Hobden is welcomed into

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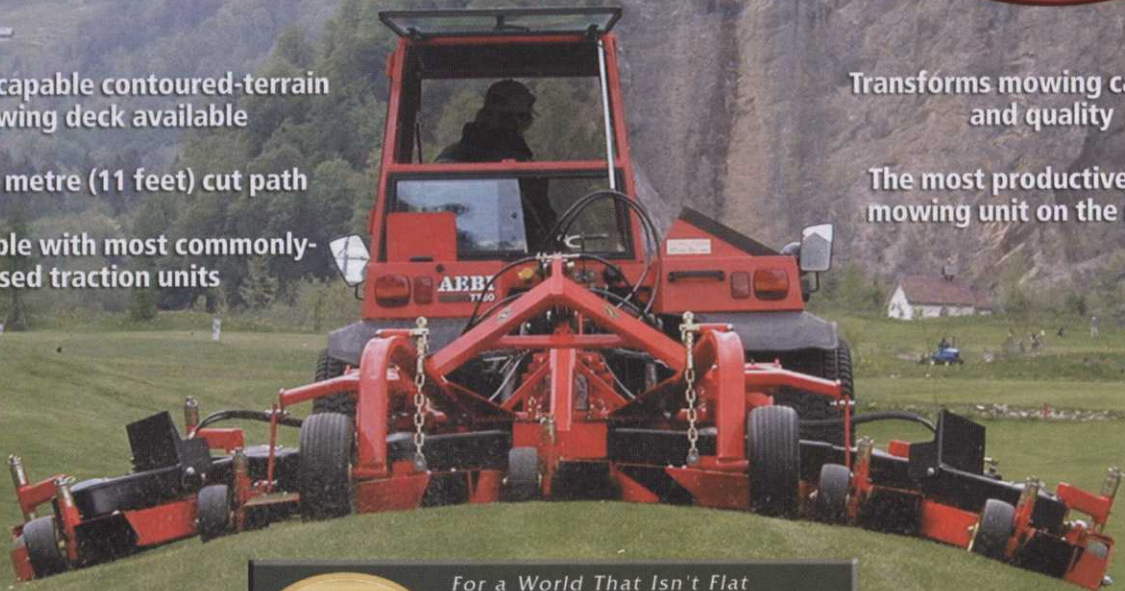
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LASTEC UK

Surrey as the new headman at Pyrford and Traditions golf courses.

Les Coombes, from Windlesham GC, would like to pass on a tip to all other clubs that suffer from invasions of Canada Geese. Les, now known as the Lone Ranger, has found that a starting pistol moves them on and also makes members who see him in the distance keep any silly little complaints to themselves.

The AGM and Turkey Trot, played at Laleham GC, was a huge success. John Ross and his greenkeepers had the course in excellent order, he said, and the meal was a culinary delight. The AGM might have produced many topics for discussion that could have kept us there all night, but fortunately this well run Section has all Surrey members 100% behind the committee, not forgetting that a few drinks usually send them to sleep until the prize giving.

Prizes were won by Gavin Kyle, 40 points, Ian Sellers, 39 points, and John Mathis, 38 points. John Mathis also won Longest Drive and Chris Varrow, Nearest the Pin. Sponsors for the day were Tacit and yours truly, after a disastrous round, grudgingly gave away the Moat Chandon.

Ian Sellers, after six years as Secretary, has decided that his reign must come to an end and, as he and his partner are expecting an addition to the family early this year, John Ross was voted on to the committee as his replacement, Ian, very many thanks from the Section for a job very, very well done. It was also confirmed that Derek Cunliffe had previously been seconded onto the committee as handicap Secretary.
Brian Willmott

Kent

The Kent Section has now been officially reformed following an EGM held at Birchwood Park Golf Centre on November 25, 2004. The new committee is: John Millen (Chairman), David Wood (Secretary), Kevin Morris and Rob Holland as Greenkeeper Members and also Neil Pullen and Gary Tait as Representatives from the trade.

It was a lively meeting and really encouraging to hear so many of the 46 attendees offering support and ideas to progress the Section's status. Clive Osgood chaired the opening proceedings in his role of South East Regional Administrator. Clive was also enthused by the high turnout and the determination of many who wish to see our Section successful again.

The EGM followed a Turkey Trot golf tournament at Birchwood Park. Many thanks to my staff who helped prepare the course superbly for the day and to the catering department for a great Christmas dinner. The day was won by Ian Garfield, from Tenterden Golf Club, on 48 points, second was Rob Holland, on 47 points, and third Michael Wigstone, from Tenterden, again on 45 points. Nearest the Pin prize went to Andy Pearson, from the London Club, and Longest Drive to Andrew Wood, of Avoncrop Amenity.

The refreshments on course were kindly provided by Ernest Doe's and evening prizes donated by Scotts, Collier Turf Care and Godfrey's. As well as a raffle, we held an auction for two tickets donated by Doe's for the Charlton versus Chelsea match, which raised £46 for the Kent Air Ambulance Trust.

Everyone who attended the day left Birchwood feeling confident that the Kent Section had found its feet and was heading in the right direction again. We do, however, require input from everyone in the Region to elevate it to its rightful status again. Clive Osgood will be visiting all clubs, in time, trying to drum up support but, in the meantime, please contact me with any news. Wishing you all a successful New Year!
Rob Holland

London

The London Section Turkey Trot has just been played over the tremendous Ashridge Golf Course, which I have been told by a number of people was in excellent condition and even more so for the time of year. Well done to the Course Manager and all his staff. The food that followed was also mentioned in great vein and I believe the carvery style dinner was very popular with everyone that attended.

Winners this year were: 1. Lee and partner, from Old Folde, and Bob, from Moor Park; 2. Chris Turpie, Steve Crossdale and Nick Brown; 3. Dave Badlham, Kevin and Dareen, from Stockley.

I would like to thank everyone that made the effort to turn up and the final count of 46 has made the year (on the golfing front) a very successful one for the London Section. After the meal we held our AGM, which was well attended, with the same committee staying on for another year and really a very quick and smooth meeting with no major issues being discussed.

At this point, I would like to thank everyone who has helped out during the year from Turners, Avoncrop, Phil Jones, Textron, Doe's, Headlands, Tacit and there are more, for whom the London Section could not have survived without and we hope to this continues from them all for years to come.

Also thanks must go to Peter Phillips and David Badham who both spent a lot of time organising venues and sponsors. Christmas will have gone by the time this is read, I hope everyone enjoyed it, all the best to everyone for a great 2005. Happy New Year
Alec Macindoe

Essex

Well it's been a long, long time, so much has happened, so much grass has grown, so much grass has been cut, many scalps, many funny stories, many interesting tales, many pieces of advice to share with other greenkeepers, many relationships made, many doses of disease caught (eh Greg), but I have sat by my mobile phone day in day out and nobody has phoned to give me anything to write about. Apart from two golf days to report about I have one piece of news. Steve Crossdale is now a proud new dad, a baby boy, it weighed 5lb 7oz and the rest of his body was 1lb 2 oz. well done Steve, glad he takes after you, a chip off the old block, or sausage off the old meat counter!

Golf days, there's been a few, or then again too few to mention, sorry been watching too much 'X Factor'. Our summer meeting was at the beautiful Saffron Walden, sponsored by Tuckwells, one of my favourite courses; sadly I was unable to attend. I understand from everyone that Ray and his team produced a superb course for everybody; a great day was had by all, and thank you to Saffron Walden Golf Club for their hospitality. Overall winner was Richard Moss, 39 points (back 9). Section 1. 1.

Greg "Hymer" Knight, 39 points; 2. Ian Cambridge, 39 points. Section 2. 1. Craig Serafin, 36 points; 2. Ray Goodshall, 34 points. Section 3. 1. Sam Cook, 38 points; 2. Jon Rattenbury, 31 points. Thomas - dad stop nagging me I can hit a longer ball than you - Fance won the guest prize with a yee ha 44 points, and Mark Day won the trade prize with 41 points. Thanks for raffle prizes from Banks Amenity, Avon Crop. Seoul Nassau, Ernest Doe's, Vitax, Avoncrop, CMW, Rigby Taylor, Sherriffs, Tacit, Collyer Turf, Uncle Tom Cobbley and all!

The autumn golf day was held at The Busted, sponsored by Mark and Craig, from Collyer Turf, again I was sadly unable to attend. I am the first one to moan about people not supporting golf days so I have given myself a good moaning and beating, which I quite enjoyed. Our thanks go to Phil Aibon, Lee Mence and all the staff at The Busted for providing us with a great course and very welcome and excellent facilities.

The overall winner of the day was Sam Cook. Section 1. 1. Rowland Hughes; 2. Greg Knight; 3. George Grimes. Section 2. 1. Andy Cracknell; 2. Ian Wood; 3. Richard Williams. Guest Prize was won by Geoff Johnson and Trade Prize was won by Robbie Mitchell, of CMW. Longest Drive was won by Dave "that makes a change" Beal and Nearest the Pin was won by Andrew Wood. Thanks for raffle prizes from Scotts, Rigby Taylor, Sherriffs, Tacit, Banks Amenity, Vitax, Tuckwells, CMW, Seoul Nassau, Tuckwells and Avoncrop.

Well that's about it from me this month, I don't like to over do it. I hope you all had a dry and Happy Christmas and a rewarding New Year. Finally please send me something to write about otherwise I will have to start writing about Abridge and how wonderful the staff are there.

Geoff Smith

SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES

We Need Your Ideas

This year's recently held South West and South Wales Regional Seminar had the theme of "The Environment". This subject was greeted with interest and enthusiasm by those members attending. We are now looking forward to next year's event and would welcome ideas from the Region's members for the next theme. If you have a subject you believe would interest members you can contact me or any member of the Regional Board with your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

Jane Jones Regional Administrator

South West

A very Happy New Year to all. Kingsdown Golf Club provided a fitting end to a classic season of events. In fact, the course could hardly have been in better condition for December, and was a tribute to the hard work of Mark Ford and all his team. Many thanks to the club for the courtesy of the course and making us so welcome.

Local estate agents doubtlessly describe adjoining properties as being, "conveniently situated for all the benefits of the golf course," but almost certainly don't mention that hard hats should be worn at all times outdoors. My greensomes partner drove first from the 18th tee with a high slice. The ball landed on the main road, bounced about two hundred feet up into the air, landed on the pitched roof of the first house, and pinged across into the garden of next door. There was a moment of stunned silence, Adrian casually picked up his tee, and said, "we'll take yours."

I may have treated Paul Godwin a little harshly last month. Don't worry mate, you're perfectly safe - we've got bigger fish to fry now. Adam Matthews (Minchinhampton) - now a confirmed serial winner, is well and truly in John Keenaghan's sights. Adam is a fresh faced, polite young man, and a pleasure to play golf with, although he's inevitably in a five-hole lead before you can say, "pass the sombrero," (The phrase "baby faced assassin" springs to mind). I wouldn't mind but he's only been playing a couple of years - however, rest assured everyone, he's got a winter of hard labour in front of him - very hard labour.

The full results of the Greensomes Stableford. 1. Rob Lane and Adam Matthews, 50 points; 2. John Keenaghan and Pete Harvard, 46 points; 3. Robin Greaves and Martin Samuels, 45 points. Nearest the Pin, at the 4th, Wayne Vincent. Nearest the Pin, at the 12th, Mark Ford.

Many thanks to all our sponsors, and especial thanks to our Patronage Partners.

Finally from Kingsdown, one of the nicest parts of the day was to bump into Dan Dobie, now retired after many years as Head Greenkeeper at Marlborough. He was just tutting about the change in seasons, and the amount of grass on the course for December, when a well-used tractor and gangs drove slowly past the window. "Look at that," screamed Dan, "you'd never have seen a gang mower with so much grass all over it in my day." Times were hard then (I think he mentioned something about giving the fairways a light top-off in mid September and then going into hibernation). Times have indeed changed.

The committee for 2005 is: Chris Sealey, Chairman; James Braithwaite, Vice Chairman; Nobby Knight, Secretary; John Keenaghan, Match Captain & Regional Board Member; John Byrne, Vice Captain; Guy Woods, Education Secretary; Paul Worster, Fixtures and Press.

Paul Jenkins stood down as Regional Board member. Many thanks to Paul, for representing the Section for a number of years. This important role now passes into the capable hands of John Keenaghan.

Chris Sealey, as Chairman of the Section, and also the Region, has put in a tremendous amount of work (often behind the scenes) for our Association, in short, for all of us. I am absolutely delighted to announce that Chris has received the South West nomination from Bernhard & Co to join the BIGGA Delegation to the GCSAA show at Orlando in the New Year. This is so well deserved, and we must thank Bernhard for their continued sponsorship.

As a result of the continuing support of our Patronage Partners, an all expenses paid place on the new British & International Turf Managers Conference, at Staverton Park, Daventry, is available to a member of the South West Section. The conference takes



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