

North

This report is shorter than normal but a full report will appear in next month's magazine. One new member this month, Philip Watson, Westhill GC.

The outing at Murcar went very well with the course being in excellent condition and the weather also being first class. Our thanks go to Brian Anderson and his staff. The winners were: Scratch. M. Maclean, Fraserburgh GC. Class 1. N. Kidd, Keith GC. Class 2. D. Mitchell, Cruden Bay GC. Class 3. M. Main, Moray GC. Apprentice. S. Mackenzie, Royal Aberdeen GC. Veterans. Roy Donald, Oldmeldrum GC. Trade. M. Dennis, Rigby Taylor. Committee Winner. Steve Sullivan. Guest. J. Gordon, Tarbet GC.

Iain Gunn

NORTHERN REGION

North East

Ponteland GC was the venue for the spring competition on April 14. As far as April showers were concerned that was way off as from the tee off at 9.30am with light rain followed very quickly with atrocious weather for the remainder of the day, it kept the scores fairly high.

Many thanks to Paddy Hetherington, Head Greenkeeper, and his staff for the excellent condition of the course and also the Committee for giving us permission to play there, hopefully we may get the chance again to play the Autumn Competition there in the near future.

Thanks also to the following sponsors: Shorts of Whitburn, TurfCare Supplies, Greenlay, Border Turf Services, Hayter - Carrs - Billington, Stocksfield GC. Many thanks to those companies who helped us out, without you we would be kind of pushed for quality prizes because that's what they were.

On a more personal note I am going to keep an eye on other Section's golf days and just look out for who sponsors them. I do know that some companies seem to prefer other parts of the country to aid the Section golf competitions, which seems a bit unfair. So beware, I'm watching closely.

The leading scores are as follows: Best Nett. R. Hetherington, Ponteland GC, 91-17-74. Best Gross. 1. A. McLure, Whickham GC, 78; 2. A. Dalby, Warkworth GC, 83-7-76; 3. J. Hood, Alnmouth GC, 81-5-76; 4. J. Storey, Alnmouth GC, 82-6-76.

Altogether about 30 players took part, it seems that the Spring Competition attracts more people than the autumn one these days. Let's hope we have the same number at Alnmouth GC on September 29.

Jimmy Richardson

North West

Due to the fact that we have no fixture list this year, which is partly my fault and partly due to the fact that venues were late being arranged, I will remind you of the fixtures for the year.

Summer Tournament, Childwall GC, July 27; Autumn Tournament, Prestbury GC, September 1; Whitelaw Bowl, Penrith GC, September 14; N/West v Golf Club Stewards, TBA; Presidents' Day & AGM, Wilmslow GC, December 5.

Duncan Smith informs me that he will have a job going soon, so anyone interested contact Duncan at Dean Wood GC, on 07799776048. Another person on the move is Peter Cross, Deputy at Woolton GC, is now Head Greenkeeper at Blundells Hills GC. I understand that the Links Manager's job at Royal Liverpool has been offered to the First Assistant from Muirfield, Craig Gilholm.

Well The Open will soon be upon us, and we have a few members from the N/W Section in the Support Team. I hope you all enjoy being part of the support team and the opportunity to see how the course is set up for the world's best players.

No more news for the moment but if you have any news you can contact me on 0151 724 5412 or 07761 583387.

Bert Cross

Northern

I'll start this month by welcoming all the new members who have joined the Section since my last note. A congratulations must go to the new Head Greenkeeper of Cookridge Hall, John Watts, on firstly his move and, secondly, amazingly dropping his handicap from 24 to 14 in four months, and then knocking me from the prizes in the Spring Tournament. Thanks John, I appreciate that!

April 20 saw the first tournament of the year. The Spring Tournament was scheduled to be held at Northcliffe Golf Club, but due to the ever unpredictable weather, Head Greenkeeper, Ken Christie, was forced to close the course. Not to be beaten, the fools amongst us travelled over the road to Shay Grange for a quick nine holes.

The results for the day were: Scratch Cup. A. Slingsby. Division One. 1. A. Baxter; 2. D. Collins; 3. P. Judd. Division Two. 1. F. Stewart; 2. R. Armitage; 3. J. Watts. Division Three. 1. J. Baxter; 2. L. Graham; 3. K. Christie. Trade. 1. M. Brear; 2. D. Smith.

A very big thank you to Ken and his team for their efforts in the run up to the day. Also, thank you to all those who got their names and payments in early. It is much appreciated.

The next tournament is President's Day and it is to be held on June 15, at Scarthingwell Golf Club. Tee off is booked for 1pm. Again, please let me have your names and payment at least a week before; if not the price for the day to latecomers goes up to £20.

A date has at long last been set for the barbecue night. It will be taking place on Saturday July 16, at Otley Golf Club. The events we have organised in the past have been poorly attended, nevertheless they have always been fantastic nights. So lets see as many of you there as possible this year. These events are arranged for you all, please try to show your support and come along for a burger and a beer! If you are interested in coming or would like more details, please do get in touch.

Well, that's about it for this month, apart from welcoming Derek Chew and Andy, new additions to the Otley Greens staff. If anybody has any news or gossip then do pass it on so I can share it in any future notes.

Tel: 01274 638366; Mobile: 07739 319060.

Adam Speight

Cleveland

Yes, yes, yes, I am proud to announce that my team won the annual Barry Walker quiz, held at Dinsdale Spa Golf Club, in March. I am certainly not one to gloat but the 20 point winning margin was the highest ever recorded. I answered only two questions correctly out of hundreds asked, but I was an inspiration to the other five team members.

The Wearside mafia were blown out of the water and blamed the missing Phil Hargrave for their demise. Poor losers! The turn out was again poor but those who attended had a great night and many thanks go to Baz and Allie for all their hard work yet again. Thanks also go to Dinsdale Spa Golf Club for their excellent hospitality and superb pie and pea supper. Cheers to Tony Mears and his staff.

The Teesside branch of the groundsmen also entered a team and didn't disgrace themselves. It was felt that these joint activities are a good idea. The groundsmen have invited the Section members to their annual flat green bowls and quoits matches that will take place on Thursday July 14,



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7pm, at Durham City Bowling Club. Further details from TC on 07831 214879. They are good nights, so let's support them!

The spring outing took place at Cleveland Golf Club, on Tuesday April 19. Results as follows: 0 - 9 handicap. 1. Phil Hargrave, Crook GC, 42pts; 2. Richie Hood, Mount Oswald GC, 34pts; 3. Martin Woods, Bedlington GC, 30pts. 10-18 handicap. 1. Chris Spence, Crook GC, 35pts; 2. Alan Shaw, Crook GC, 33pts, back 9; 3. Stan Shotton, Durham City GC, 33pts. 19-28 handicap. 1. Ian Pemberton, Bedale GC, 30pts; 2. 'Titch' McGeogh, Richmond GC, 29pts; 3. Dave Jobey, Consett GC, 28pts. Trade Winner. Jamie Applegarth, Rigby Taylor, 28pts. Longest Drive. Martin Woods, Bedlington GC. Nearest the Pin. Tony Smith, Teesside GC.

Congratulations to all winners. Many thanks go to Cleveland Golf Club for the courtesy of the course. Craig Pollock and his staff produced a great links course, a challenge for us - well done! The food was excellent too, so thanks to the Steward and staff.

We were well supported by the trade on the day. Many thanks to Liam, from Amtec, for being our main sponsor for the day. Prizes were also gratefully received from East Riding Horticulture, Rigby Taylor, Tacit, Tower Chemicals and Turfcare Specialists.

Well, with spring approaching, here's wishing for a good season.

Terry Charlton - El Prez

Sheffield

Not a lot to report this month, just a few things to notify you of. The Committee is this year arranging a one day seminar to replace our winter

lecture program, in an attempt to flag our failing attendances at our lectures. This will be held on Monday October 24.

The actual line up of this has yet to be confirmed but I will keep you all informed of its progress and when we learn more. In association with this, we will be running a separate winter lecture in the New Year with a different start time and maybe even a different day to see if this also helps attendances.

Our President, Neil Maltby, has been granted Life Membership of the Association. Well done Neil. Two new members this month joining our Section are Ben Hardwick, from Brough Golf Club, and Thomas Joyce, from Silkstone Golf Club. We all welcome you to the Section and hope to see you soon!

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that David Wadkin died recently. David was a very active member of our Section and, before his retirement in 2001, he worked at Hallamshire Golf Club for 22 years. David leaves his wife, Margaret, to whom on behalf of the Section I extend our condolences.

Our summer competition is to be held at Renishaw Golf Club on June 27.

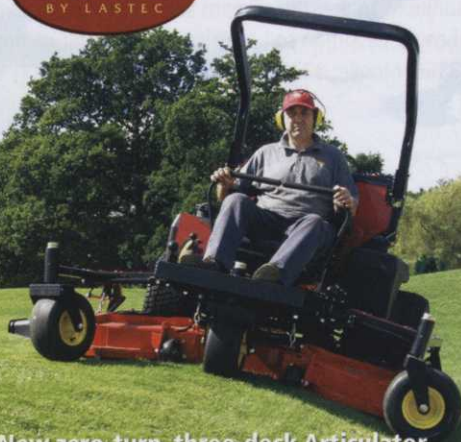
Once again may I ask you if you have any newsworthy of putting in the magazine please feel free to get in touch with me via email, on jv.lax@tesco.net, or the old fashion way on 07793111845. I am sure some of you have some news out there!

John Lax

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North Wales

Shady's back, Shady's back, Shady's back, will the real Slim Shady please stand up. The spring tournament at Upton-by Chester GC took place on May 25, all results will be in next month's issue.

The North Wales vs. North West was lost by our good selves 3 1/2 to 2 1/2. We took along a strong team from our Section but, after a hard fought battle on The Open qualifying course, it proved we were not strong enough. Our thanks go to Steve Oultram and his staff for presenting a great golf course for the time of year, April 5, and thanks also to the club and caterers for fine meal, which just makes losing that bit more bearable.

I then journeyed over to Liverpool Airport for a flight with the BIGGA Regional Administrator, Peter Larter, to do a support mission over in the Isle of Man, staying overnight at the fine Castletown Links Golf Hotel where we were made most welcome. We spoke with the golf clubs and members on the Island about the benefits of BIGGA membership and any questions they had.

One of the suggestions was they would like a golf event for the greenkeepers from the mainland to come over and savour the delights of the courses across there. So come on Bert, they are in the North West Section, and with your contacts at Liverpool John Lennon, can we see it on a future fixtures list?

There is a new man at the helm at Hoylake, Craig Gilholm, ex Deputy from Muirfield GC. The 33 year old takes over this month, starting on June 6, bringing down his wife and two children to live on the course. Craig also bringing lots of links knowledge with him and is looking forward to hosting next year's Open Championship, of which the R&A have said women will be allowed to play in, now that's a first.

Congratulations go to Jeff Jago, from Sutton Hall GC. He and his wife, Dawn, gave birth to a beautiful baby boy and David, a future North Wales Greenkeeper perhaps? Or possibly a train driver, bank manager, airline pilot or footballer, we don't know yet!

Shaun Pritchard has moved back to Llanynymech GC, from Henlle Park, and Gareth Woosnam, from the Ian Woosnam clan, takes over the Head job at Oswestry, as John Humphreys takes an early retirement after many great years at the course and we wish them all well.

Prestatyn GC is getting back to normality after the vandalised greens of last year, due to Dave Parry's attention to detail and the slow process of overseeding with a slotter dressing, and that little touch of fertiliser. Dave hosted a Tamsel Tour event and had his first big Welsh Championship on the links last month. It can be done, he said, and it was.

I know I always ask the question, but after four years of writing the Section notes and trying not to repeat myself, if there is any news, views or comments you would like to put in a future issue, please contact me or email me, andrew@acorngolf.co.uk, with your stories.

See you next month

Mesen Cymru

Andrew Acorn

MIDLAND REGION

Midland

I shall begin this month's notes with that all important issue of H&S. In my infinite wisdom and obviously due to my vain attempt at following the latest fashions, I have been sporting a rather distinguished beard. Following a month of growing this fur, all was set for styling and trimming. While at work I had to employ the use of a butane gas torch, of which during use suddenly went from a sharp blue flame to a cloud of fire.

The fireball erupted in my face, thus singeing the beard, eyebrows, hair, and the end of one's snozzer. Consequently, after putting my head out, I was rendered with a reverse Mohican beard, half a left eyebrow and a distinct guise resembling Rudolph the red nosed reindeer.

I have thus another synonym, 'Singe'. The above only occurred due to the fact that the gas nozzle had become a quarter turn off fully butted-up. It would have taken five seconds to have checked, complacency is a very dangerous beast. Food for thought I hope!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome six new members to our Section this month. Such being: Simon Fisher, Stephen Guest, Alan Turner, Paul Smith, Richard Woods and, finally, Janet Everett. It is very encouraging to be able to welcome a lass to the Section, as there are too few within our industry. As lasses have integrated within other fields and improved them, so shall the greenkeeping industry benefit likewise.

Now for a question. If you were to choose a 25 years' of service gift, what would it be? Maybe a gold watch, a holiday, or even a piece of furniture to rest those weary bones! No, a toolbox, and just the box mind you, no tools. Come on Tony, have a word with yourself man. But seriously, congratulations to A. Luckman, the Head Greenkeeper at Harbourne GC, for 25 years of service. Only 24 left mate.

It is with disbelief that I must report that after what must have been much psychological badgering, Emma has finally agreed to go through with the marriage to Steve Wenlock, on August 6. About time to Steve, must feel like checking out with a 170, you lucky git. Wishing you both a wonderful day and a happy fulfilling life together.

Don't forget, our summer tournament is to be played at Redditch GC, on July 22, start time 13.30. Please get your entries to Gary Cunningham by June 10. Should anyone require an entry form please call me on 07816 410 552.

Finally, to finish this month's notes, an occurrence that is a new one on me. While at work I received a call from one of the lads saying that he was stuck. After finding out where, I told him that I'd bring a rope to pull the machine out. He responded by advising that a chainsaw might be better as he was stuck in a tree, yes a tree. I could have sworn that, not mentioning any names, Phil 'I'm in a tree' Nixon, went out on the Toro Sidewinder, and not our Harrier Jump-jet. I can't wait to see the risk assessment on that.

If you have a similar story or any other news please let me know. Remember that these notes can only be written with your help and input.

Sean McDade

East of England

Well, boys, the season has started with a bang, if the May Day weekend was anything to go by. That was serious weather, hope you didn't have too much bunker washdown. We even had problems at Milton, I wouldn't say we are flat but our members get a nosebleed on the 18th tee.

The results from Sleaford are as follows: 1. D. Coupland, 67-2-65, BB9; 2. R. Moody, 80-15-65; 3. I. Mawer, 73-3-70; 4. I. Batty 75-5-70; 5. T. Shinkins, 94-23-71. Trade. J. North, Burdens, 86-18-68. Nearest the Pin. A. Astle, M. Brear.

Unfortunately, I couldn't make the golf day due to a previous double booking, i.e. twins and their mother returning to work, but various members that played have reported that the course was in excellent condition and the meal was good too. So our thanks go to Ian and the catering staff.

The day was also marked by an incredible score by young Mr Coupland, of Gross 67, with a back nine of 28 - see the news pages. A tremendous effort and perhaps a pretender to the throne of National Champion. Our thanks also go to Rigby Taylor, M. Brear and S. Dickinson.

I also believe a deputation of turf cutters played in the AmAm at Spalding, ably led by our beloved Secretary, Les Howkins. They also had

the audacity to win, so well done lads and I hope the course will recover in time for the start of the season - only joking. The winning team comprised: P. Wilkinson, G. MacDonald, R. Welford and L. Howkins.

A little bird tells me that a certain Committee Member didn't wear a BIGGA tie at Sleaford. I'm sure this honest upright character will pay his fine, won't you R***!

Finally, a warm welcome to the Section for Gareth Rodgers, the new Head Greenkeeper at Grimsby Golf Club. We look forward to meeting you at Section events.

Allan Walker

BB&O

The pollen count has gone ballistic and so has the grass. Summer is here and we will be following the fairways as we are off to our next event at the home of the Henley Royal Regatta, which was first held in 1839 and has been held annually ever since, except during the two World Wars. Originally staged by the Mayor and people of Henley as a public attraction with a fair and other amusements, the emphasis rapidly changed so that competitive amateur rowing became its main purpose.

With this in mind, on June 30 this year, the BB&O will hold the Gem Summer Rose Bowl Golf Tournament. This is an event not to be missed - a must for your diary. Your hosts, Mitch Stewart, our Treasurer, and Steve Shaw, Course Manager at Henley GC, will be on hand to welcome you to an exciting time when Henley Town comes alive right in the middle of Regatta Week.

Henley GC, designed by James Braid in 1907, is a parkland course with many trees and the course features a new state of the art full irrigation system. So, why not down your tools and come along to what will be a great day for all. Closing date for your entry will be June 23. For any further information and details contact John Scoones on 07880 550 380.

Results from the Rigby Taylor knockout have filtered through and victorious in the first round on home turf was Barry Holt, from Burford GC, and playing partner Sid Arrowsmith. Gracious in defeat were the beach boys, Brian Payne Jnr and Ray Rosser, from Burnham Beeches GC. More to follow next month.

Phil Beale is leaving Bearwood Lakes GC and is making a fresh start close to the Blue Mountains, near Sydney, in Australia. Phil has secured a challenging position running a new build operation and from all over the BB&O we wish Phil and his family the best of luck in emigrating all the way down under.

Hop a Long Cassidy, Brian Payne, is no longer in pain! On April Fools' Day this year Brian had a very successful hip operation. With six months of convalescing and free bus tokens to look forward to, and with the latest NHS super duper crutches, he is fully on the mend. Brian's spirits are high and in no time he will be back at Burnham Beeches GC.

Last year we held a clay pigeon shooting day at West London shooting grounds, which proved successful, and this year we are going to repeat this event. So get your blunderbusses out of the cupboard under the stairs and start polishing your shooting skills. Format and details will be mailed out later in the year, but keep this date, September 20, free and stick it in your diary before you forget. Another event planned for November 8, subject to confirmation, is the BB&O's Section educational seminar. More details will be published in next month's report.

If any member has any news or views they would like to share, or would like more information about the Section and forthcoming events you only have to call John Scoones on 0788 550 380.

Mark Day

The BB&O's Chairman's Message

During early November this year your Committee are intending to run an educational seminar on the lines of: 'How climatic change has affected our operational procedures'. Pencilled in already we have some wonderfully talented individuals who are well equipped with an abundance of knowledge for such events.

Obviously your support is vital for its success and future, and I therefore request that you watch out for details in the magazine and at our golf days. As always, the well travelled Mark Day will be a key source of information when he comes knocking on your door.

I do hope that you are all having a good greenkeeping season so far and enjoying the early surge of grass growth.

Good Luck.

Sid Arrowsmith MG

Mid Anglia

Greetings fellow workers. April 27 saw our first event of the year and Royston Golf Club was the host. 27 players took part in 18 tough holes up on Royston heath. As usual big thanks go to all involved at Royston, especially to Tim McCreddie and his staff, for making the day run smoothly and presenting a great golf course.

Also thanks to Rigby Taylor, who were sponsors for the day, all the trade reps for their raffle prizes and to Ernest Doe & Sons for providing a drinks buggy, manned by Julian (hic). Some say he's still driving about the heath, I expect we'll see him when he runs out of drinks!

The results were as follows: 1. R. Saunders: 2. G. Hainsworth: 3. F. Scullion. Trade Prize. S. Crossdale. Longest Drive. S. Mason. Nearest the Pin. R. Saunders. The top two will be entered into the National Competition, more information about that soon.

Just a quick notice, from June 7 - 11 Heydon Grange Golf Club, near Royston, will be once again hosting the PGA Euro Pro Tour. Come along and see these guys play, five of last year's entries are now playing on the European Tour. It's free to get in and is also being covered by Sky Sports, so you may also get your mug on the box.

That's all for now, what's that I can hear? A snipping noise? It's ok, it's only Richard's handicap!

Bob Butfoy

SOUTH EAST

Surrey

It's that time again; the day before this magazine's deadline and my stock of information, results, local news and Surrey gossip was at an all time low. Luckily, in the past few days I've managed to gather some bits and pieces of interest and on these I now report.

Cuddington GC have appointed a new Course Manager and Simon Osbourne will be moving from Wild Wood GC to take up his new position in the near future.

Dan McGrath is now the Course Manager at Pyrford and Traditions GC, having moved from Deputy at King's Hill GC, in Kent. Dan, we welcome you to Surrey and hope you will be changing your BIGGA membership to Surrey Section.

Daren Wales, Deputy at Clandon Regis GC, has been promoted to Headman and we wish well in his rise to power and fortune.

Enough of promotions let us now congratulate one of our members and his wife, Donna, on their first adventure into parenthood. Isla was born on April 22, 7lbs 3ozs, and is now making Paul Howard, from Bletchingley,

realise that up until now, getting up at 5am was really a lay in.

Our next golf day is at Sunningdale GC for the McMillian Tankard on July 18 and results from Banstead GC will appear in the next edition.

Brian Willmott

Kent

Well, here we are halfway through the golfing year already but still I can't get my handicap down! I think I should have been a Sales Rep, they seem to be at a different Section event every week. Mind you, I've only had one full round this year so that could be a factor.

Our first major golfing day is fast approaching. We tee off at 12pm, on June 9, at Broome Park Golf Club. Please arrive in plenty of time for the early festivities. Also, as I've said in the past, please remember that these days are a very informal outing where all levels of greenkeepers are welcome. I'm sure all attendees will have a great day at this lovely club and virtually everyone can guarantee not coming last because I'll be there!

A few new faces we hope to welcome in person on the day are: John Donnelly, who has recently returned to Kent from Denmark to take on the Course Manager's role at Chislehurst. Also welcome are Matt Macklin and his team of four Head Greenkeepers, from the Altonwood group of courses. We thank you for your support and hope you become regular members of our Section.

Two people from our Section who have recently moved on are Dan McGrath, who has moved from being Deputy Manager at King's Hill to Course Manager at Pyrford, and Steve Suttill, of North Foreland Golf Club, who has decided to hang up his boots after many years of long service. The Section wish them all well.

Latest in the list of companies we owe our gratitude to are Drake and Fletcher. We are very grateful to all our sponsors for the support they provide.

Don't forget! Please be forthcoming with any news from your areas. You can contact me directly on 07843 410755 or online at grassyards@hotmail.com.

Best of luck guys.

Rob Holland

Essex

Here we go again! It does not seem five minutes since we all descended on Orsett GC at the end of the 2004 golfing calendar and already the Essex countryside air is filled yet again with the roars of laughter arising from the first tee banter, which has become synonymous with our golf days. Thorpe Hall Golf Club, in sunny Southend, played host to our spring meeting, for which our thanks are extended to the club and Secretary, Gary Smith.

The spring meeting is probably the most challenging of all the meetings for a greenkeeper, and I take my hat off to any man brave enough to offer his course at this time of year. That said Course Manager, John Sinclair, Deputy, Ian Gordon, and the lads at Thorpe Hall did us proud, presenting a challenging course in great condition. Well done.

The number of greenkeepers attending lead itself perfectly to two handicap categories 0-13 and 14-28, the winners of those categories were: Cat.1, 0-13 h/cap. 1. Richard Linnen, Upminster, 39pts; 2. Anthony Kirwin, Colchester, 39pts (countback last 9); 3. Richard Dunmow, Channells, 39pts (countback last 9). Cat.2, 14-28 h/cap. 1. Craig Serafin, Colchester, 41pts; 2. Sam Cook, Colchester, 37pts; 3. Andrew Cracknell, Orsett, 36pts. Trade Prize. Steve Crosdale, Headland Amenity Ltd, 36pts. Guest Prize. Jamie Hughes, 39pts. Nearest the Pin. James Rattenbury, Colchester. Longest Drive. Anthony Kirwin, Colchester. Overall Winner. Craig Serafin, Colchester. Seems to be a pattern developing here!

A special mention must go to our lowest handicap golfer and recent representative of the Essex Section at the BIGGA National Championship,

David Beale, who managed to lose every ball in his bag on the way to amassing a blistering 21 points. Dave has just been promoted to Deputy Head at Orsett GC, well done mate.

After the evening meal the Chairman of our Section, Arnold Phipps-Jones, thanked Steve the Chef and the staff for the delicious three course dinner and, once he had remembered where we actually were that day, handed over to our main sponsors of the day, Tacit.

Mark Day made his usual well presented speech, thanking the club and staff then proceeded to award the prizes. Our thanks got to Mark and Tacit, as well as suppliers of the raffle prizes: Avoncrop, Headland Amenity, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Collier Turf Care and Tuckwells, who we also thank for producing this year's fixture list, cheers Neil.

Adrian Cornell, who has recently moved from Gosfield GC to Stockbrook Manor, is organising more tractor driving courses, which I understand may be compulsory to anyone wishing to use these in the future. You can contact Adrian for details on 01376 562835.

The South East Regional Conference will be taking place on November 9 at Benton hall GC, Witham, Essex.

Finally I am sure the whole Section will join me in sending condolences to Colin White's family. Colin sadly passed away in March. He was a great supporter to our Section in the early years and will always be remembered for his big smile and happy go lucky character.

Hope to see you all at the summer meeting, which is at Abridge Golf & Country Club, on June 8. This is also our National Qualifier, so get practising.

Steve Crosdale

SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES

South West

Have you ever noticed how the grass never takes the bank holiday off? I'm writing this after the early May holiday on May 2. When we left work on the Friday the course was pretty tidy - greens fast, fairways cut, tees nice and clean - when we got back on the Tuesday the fairways needed the Amazone flail mower to get them back in check, try that on 54 holes sometime.

The bunkers looked like someone had held a Speedway meeting in them, and as for the rough - well. It'll probably take until the next Bank Holiday to get things back under control. Thanks again for the feedback from the last issue regarding winter conditions and general stress. I was almost glad to find it's not only me.

Two forthcoming events. Matt Maryon, Courses Manager at the Gloucestershire & Woodspring Golf Club, has a new course partway under construction on a landfill site. Matt has very kindly offered to show a party of greenkeepers around the new site, covering such subjects as construction of new greens and tees, installation of irrigation, how to deal with difficult terrain and difficult materials and a host of other related subjects. Thursday June 30, at 2pm, at the Woodlands' golf clubhouse for Matt's guided tour. No charge, please confirm numbers by dropping me a mail at paul.worster@tesco.net.

Jon Jarvis, Course Manager at Lansdown, has invited members to 'an evening at the races'. Jon is very kindly going to organise a party booking, on August 26, for an evening meeting at Bath racecourse. Meet at the golf club, which has the twin advantages of cheaper beer and free parking. Then enjoy very preferential rates of entry to the races, more drink and food, plus a flutter on the gee-gees, should make for a relaxing experience.

Smart casual clothing for the golf club, and the members enclosure at

the races - racing from 5.15 to 7.45, music and dancing after the racing. Send a cheque for £10 to Jon Jarvis, at Lansdown Golf Club, to reserve your place. Many thanks from the Section Committee to both Matt and Jon for their ideas - it's now up to the rest of us to support them.

There are matches coming up against the Welsh Section at St Pierre, in August, and against the South Coast Section in September. Please telephone John Keenaghan, 07779 479869, if you wish to represent the Section.

Congratulations to eight of the South West members for being selected for the greenkeeping team at St Andrews this year. Paul Jenkins, John Keenaghan, Catherine Walls, Mark Lewthwaite, Justin Austin, Jamie Acton, Colin Woakes, and Chris Watts. Well done and have a good week.

A cautionary note - there are walk-in thieves operating in the South West. Marlborough Golf Club recently lost a significant amount of small equipment, such as strimmers, blowers, etc, which were taken in broad daylight when the lads were out on the course. Someone has sussed that every golf club has a maintenance base, which is often well tucked away, open all day, full of portable goodies, and not necessarily manned. I'm locking ours now - you have been warned!

A warm welcome awaited all competitors at our spring meeting at Forest Hills GC, Coleford, on April 25. As I took the long, dark road through the Forest of Dean, avoiding grazing sheep, negotiating the sharp bends around rocky outcrops, catching the odd glimpse of an isolated dwelling through the trees and undergrowth, I was struck by a single thought: "Christ, I hope I've brought plenty of balls." Happily, the trees opened out to reveal the very tidy 6500yds par 72 course, which was beautifully presented by Paul Gibson and his team.

The original course opened in 1992, with an upgrade masterminded by Paul, in 2002. The addition of some 10 hectares of new land gave the opportunity to expand the course into the challenge it is today. I had the pleasure of playing with Paul, and his Assistant, Gary Daunter, whom we just managed to pip by a single point, and Paul was explaining some of the set up of the course.

For the greens he has a Ransomes G-Plex together with John Deere pedestrian mowers and they had been cut at around 4mm on the day. He had had a problem with an application of lawn sand some three weeks previously, when the weather had turned, and the material had built up on the wheels of the drop spreader causing some scorching. That apart, the greens really were in fantastic condition. The fairways are Gary's department, and he cuts every week, striping them with a Ransomes Fairway 305.

Many thanks to Forest Hills - this is a thriving, busy club, yet we were made so welcome right from the moment we arrived - apart from the muppet who gave me completely the wrong combination for the gents when we got there. Talk about desperately pressing buttons after an hour and a half in the car; I've never been quite so pleased to hear something go clunk-click.

The full results were: 1. E. Rowland, Forest Hills, and Sean Richards, Taunton, 49pts; 2. Paul and Matt Worster, Minchinhampton, 44pts; 3. Paul Gibson and Gary Daunter, Forest Hills, 43pts. Nearest the Pin, 14. Paul Gibson. Nearest the Pin, 18. E. Rowland and Sean Richards. Again, many thanks to Forest Hills staff and committee for the day.

Finally, it was very nice to see Jane Jones, our Regional Administrator, on the course, partnering Chris Sealey. Unfortunately I don't think they were having the best of days, because Jane remarked to me as we passed on the 10th: "What a game, I couldn't hit a barn door today." This was odd because I'd been watching, and was quite sure she'd managed to hit several on the front nine. Thanks for all the feedback - keep it coming. Tel: 01285 651908/07768 394593, email: paul.worster@tesco.net.

Paul Worster

South Coast

Spring is almost over now, although with the current low overnight temperatures you'd never believe we're almost in summertime. It's certainly bringing us another set of problems as our courses don't know quite what to do and the current spell of strong breezes hasn't helped, changing our golf course in a space of a couple of days. But surely that's the beauty of our courses?

They should change with the weather and its well to remember we play on a surface and not colour. The Masters saw the re-emergence of Tiger Woods in the Majors or did it? Only time will tell but his battle with Chris Dimarco was compelling viewing. As usual the Augusta Syndrome hit many courses with Course Managers donning the flak jackets to help cope with the usual onslaught of misguided complaints and comparisons.

Peter Alliss made several excellent points in his commentary about how unrealistic it is to compare our courses to Augusta. One point he failed to mention is why should we strive to want to be like Augusta? As wonderful as Augusta is and looks, all of our traditional courses have their own beauty and charm that should never be overlooked.

Off the soap box now and onto Section news. We must congratulate the Section's finest athlete, Ian Nobel, for his latest run in the London Marathon. Even with a knee injury, Ian finished the course in a very creditable four hours, although he wasn't too happy with his time. Cancer Research was certainly happy as Ian raised £800 for them on the day. Well done Ian and only time will tell if he will be racing on the streets of London again next year.

The draw has now been made for the Jim Fry Pairs and please ensure all matches are played promptly and that you phone all match results through to Phil Wentworth. Good luck to you all!

May 10 was a very special day for the Section as it saw the inaugural playing of the Colin White Memorial Trophy. This was our first golf day without Chalks and with his brothers, Rob and Steve, playing and his mother, Jill, attending the dinner he was always going to be with us in spirit.

Highcliffe Castle was the venue and Mike Buckle and his team were busy preparing the course as the field of 60 arrived to contest the trophy, which was a 27 hole Stableford. Jane Jones travelled across to be a part of the day, although she conveniently left her clubs at home. Never mind, it was great to see her.

It seemed so apt that sponsors on the day were Avoncrop and Vitax and as usual Joe Crawley was on hand to ensure that everyone started off on time. Joe really is the South Coast's Mr Starter, he does a fantastic job and is always treated to an array of different opening shots, which I'm sure makes the job all the more interesting. I am still yet to persuade him to play but I won't give up.

The weather was beautiful although there was a stiff breeze just to make those long par 3's even more interesting. I had the pleasure of playing with Chalks' brother, Steve, and was treated to some excellent Chalky stories, which helped me forget about my golf, thankfully! The scoring on the day was excellent and the first winner of the Colin White Memorial Trophy was Shaun Whittle - see the photo in the News Section of the magazine.

Other winners on the day were: Division 1.1. Brian Forder, 53; 2. Alan Magee, 53. Division 2.1. Joe Cooper, 60; 2. Brian Green, 59. Division 3. 1. Shaun Whittle, 61; 2. Wayne Norris, 61. Trade Prize. Barry McCloskey. Longest Drive. Andrew Wood. Nearest the Pin. Steve Christopher.

A huge thanks to Highcliffe Castle Golf Club for their superb hospitality. General Manger, Graham Fisher, was an enormous help and couldn't do any more in making us feel so welcome and help make our day such a special one. Mike Buckle and his team must be congratulated on producing a first class course, where there was not a blade of grass out of place.

His course has a reputation for being in superb condition and how that reputation was right! I know that the team had worked so hard in preparing the course and they were extremely proud to hold the golf day. Well they can all hold their heads very high and feel very proud, well done all!

Malcolm and Sue, the Stewards, along with all the catering and bar staff looked after us so well and gave us a feast to remember. Matt Blake, who sat next to me at dinner, eyes lit up when it was announced that we could eat as much as we wanted. Still with the physique of a racing snake I suppose he could do with putting some weight on! Trouble is, no matter what he eats he just doesn't. Don't you just love people like that!

Chris Sturgess, as always, came up trumps in organising the day and we are extremely thankful for all his hard work. Also thanks to Alan Magee for his help with the scoring. I must also thank all the sponsors who donated the fantastic raffle prizes. With Alan Magee's hard work we raised £280, which was donated to Macmillan Cancer Relief, thanks for everyone's generosity. I have left our thanks to our sponsors last for a specific reason.

To our sponsors, Avoncrop and Vitax, a massive thanks for a truly superb prize table. Joe Crawley and Chris Briggs put a great deal of thought and effort in choosing the prizes and it was much appreciated by the winners. Chris Briggs also announced that Chalks' replacement will be Joe Crawley. What a fantastic move for both Joe and Avoncrop and we wish Joe every success in his new post.

I'm sure Chalky would be delighted that Joe has succeeded him. It was lovely to see so many trade representatives during the day who all wanted to be a part of such a special occasion. Thank you so much for attending.

Before presenting the trophy to Shaun Whittle Chalks' mother, Jill, thanked the Section for all their support and reminded us that as long as he lives in our memories Chalky will always be with us. How true those words are.

As we said our goodbyes, Jane Jones remarked on what a great Section we have. She was made to feel so welcome and remarked on how well and professional the day was run and what great support we received. Long may it continue! As the sun finally set it was time to head home. Was it a good day? In those immortal words, it was all lovely!

Our next golf day is Rushmore on July 7. It's an invitation day and all entries along with a cheque for £18 per person, made payable to BIGGA South Coast, should be sent to Chris Sturgess at his new address: 31 Bay Road, Sholing, SO19 8EZ.

Until next month.

Alex McCombie

Devon & Cornwall

This is the month that I have to scratch the old brain box to think about my report for this month's issue. Our autumn/winter monthly BIGGA meetings are in the past and I have not heard any gossip on my travels to write about, or at least none that would past the eye of the Editors' censors at HQ. Like the rest of the UK Greenkeepers we are all working flat out as we are now into the competition season.

One bit of news to report; Alan Potter has joined Dainton Park Golf Club, near Newton Abbot, as Deputy Head Greenkeeper. Alan departed Exeter Golf Club, where he had been for 16 years. Previously he had worked at Royal St Georges Golf Club for nine years. Alan has joined Dainton Park so he can take over from Buster Lewer when he retires in a couple of year's time.

Looking towards the future, plans are going well with dates and venues for our future meetings for our Section, so find your pen and diary and mark them in now, then you have no excuse for missing any meetings. They are as follows: June 15, Mid Summer meeting, Launceston Golf Club, sponsored by Symbio; October 12, Mullion Golf Club Cornwall; November

3, Soil Science Workshop, Padbrook Golf Club, with PSD and Irritech; November 16, Saunton Golf Club, AGM; November 22, Cannington College, Regional Seminar, December 6, Okehampton Golf Club, Christmas Dinner; January 11, Bude & North Cornwall Golf Club; February 15, Warren Golf Club, Dawlish Warren. March to be confirmed at a later date.

So gentleman you have no excuse for missing the above meetings. I will send out the details of each meeting well in advance to all members.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Head Greenkeepers from the above clubs who have assisted me in making the above venues, without your help I would find it a lot more difficult.

I would like to remind the Committee members that our next meeting will be held at Launceston Golf Club after the golf and dinner. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Donovan O Hunt - Events Coordinator

NORTHERN IRELAND

Our Section enjoyed a visit to the Royal Belfast GC on March 31 to view the recent improvements to the course. Head Greenkeeper, Jim Eager, and Deputy, Harry Creighton, gave us an interesting walk around the course featuring the extensive drainage improvements carried out by White Horse Contracts.

New tees have also been added, sown out with dwarf rye, while the club also plan to rebuild a number of greens. Many thanks to Jim and Harry for giving up their valuable time and to Royal Belfast GC for their hospitality and the refreshment they provided.

The spring golf competition took place at Carnelea GC on April 14, which is situated outside Bangor Town overlooking Belfast Lough. Conditions on the day were pretty testing to say the least with a strong northerly wind and heavy showers.

Course Manager, Jonny McCabe, and his team had the course in superb condition for mid April, with the quality putting surfaces deserving worthy praise. The conditions suited the Royal County Down lads again, with Section Secretary, Gary Crawford, coming out on top, just beating Dad, Eamonn, and his uncle, Noel, to the first prize.

Results were as follows: 1. Gary Crawford, RCD, 35pts; 2. Eamonn Crawford, RCD, 33pts; 3. Noel Crawford, RCD, 32pts. Nearest the Pin. Gary Murphy, Sliverwood GC. Longest Drive. Lee Cartmill, Malone GC.

Many thanks to our sponsors, Coburns of Banbridge, for their generous support and also Graham Prosser, from Tacit, who also provided prizes. William Cartmill and David Eager, from Coburns, braved the conditions on the day and were on hand to present the prizes. Many thanks also to Carnelea GC and the catering staff for their hospitality, we once again enjoyed our visit to your fine course.

A few guys are on the move this month with Warren Burnside leaving Malone GC to take up the position of Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Bangor GC. Also venturing to pastures new is Kyle Irwin, former Head Greenkeeper at Lurgan GC, who has moved to a Northern Ireland Area Sales Representative position with Turfcare Solutions. Our best wishes go to both these lads in their new positions.

That leaves me to remind all our members that our next two golf days will be on Thursday May 26 at Fort William GC and Thursday June 30 at Allen Park Antrim.

Well that's all my news from this month folks. I hope to see our regular golfing members at our next couple of meetings.

Ken Henderson

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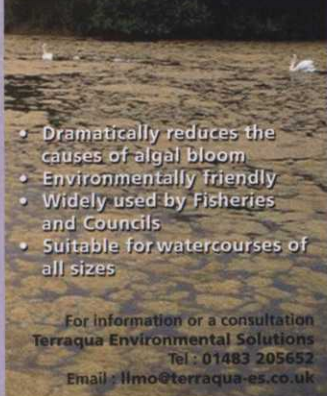
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