

# A Fescue Future?

In the conclusion of this two part series, Steve Isaac, Assistant Director - Golf Course Management, The R&A, documents his investigation into Denmark's redevelopment of fescue greens.

April's article, *Seeing is Believing*, described The R&A's introduction to the fescue greens of Denmark. Here, the story is picked up after our Golf Course Committee had digested the report from our initial visit.



▲ Left and right: The contrasting environment to Falster greens - exposed and shaded ▲

## THE STRENGTH OF THE CASE?

Thrilled as we were by what we had seen, there was the nagging concern as to how representative this movement toward fescue was. We needed to see more going through the process to be convinced this was a long-term commitment and not just the sort of short-term fancy seen, and then discarded, by many in the UK, whose course management policy often changes with the revolving door of the Committee.

In mid-September 2004, I returned to Copenhagen to be given a wider ranging tour of Denmark and its golf courses. My guide, once more, was Chris Haspell, now the Course Manager at Hørsholm Golf Club, and previously the Golf Course Consultant to the Danish Golf Union. Three days saw visits to courses in Jutland as well as the main island. All exhibited high fescue counts and promising success rates in converting to this species. Two examples stand out, at Falster and Markusminde.

Falster is where Chris started his working career in Denmark in the early 1990's. An STRI report from those days by Alistair Beggs identifies *Poa annua* dominated greens with real thatch problems. A return visit would have Alistair wondering if it was the same course.

The greens are now firm and those in more exposed situations have a very high fescue content. The key to this remarkable transformation? Simple, managing for fescue and not for *Poa annua*. Low nitrogen input, a mowing height of 5mm, plenty of light topdressings and an intensive overseeding programme retold exactly the same story heard during our previous visit.

Progress is slower to shaded surfaces and these are in quite severe shade. Here, firmness has improved dramatically but the sward is taking its time to change, with bent coming in but fescue wary of establishing in such a hostile environment.

The real sign that growing fescue has become the accepted way of doing things, rather than just a trend, in Denmark is that courses are now being sown out with this grass to meet environmental restrictions and resource availability. In this regard, the visit to Markusminde was, probably, the most exciting of all. This course was sown throughout two years ago to fescue/bent. It could be considered the blueprint for the sustainable golf course in northern Europe - costing around £500,000 to build an 18 hole course, 9 hole par-3 and driving range.

The course is maintained, to a decent standard, by two greenkeepers, no pesticides are used and in 2004 the owner - a farmer - applied only 10 kg/ha of nitrogen to the greens. Thanks to such a low nitrogen input, fescue remains the dominant species on the greens and also to fairways, where it provides superb lies and requires far less mowing than other species.

Potentially as, if not more, exciting is the Vallø Golf Centre which was sown wall to wall with pure fescue in September 2004. A blend of Chewings and slender creeping red fescues were chosen after consideration in the design stage of a water restriction of 5,000 cubic metres a year and spraying controls. There is even talk of an extremely famous firm of American architects designing a course in Denmark which will be sown out to fescues. Now that really would be a break through!

## THE REALLY RADICAL APPROACH!

Further calls to see the courses at Sebbel Kloster, Hørsholm, Fredensborg, Furesø and Dragor Golf Clubs only served to reinforce the impression. Of particular note is the bravery of Furesø and their Course Manager, Hans Beurling. Hans has the reputation of being something of an experimentalist amongst his Danish colleagues. However, even they were expressing concern

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▲ Left and right: The practice green at Furesø in May and August ▲

over his mental health when he resurfaced his practice putting green by stripping off 100mm of rootzone before replacing it with clean material and overseeding with fescue and velvet bent. Nick Park and I saw this green a few weeks after seeding during our visit to Denmark in May 2004, the development over the intervening period and what I was now looking at was startling.

The club had undertaken rebuilding of a few greens prior to this, using the more conventional technique of removing everything that was there and replacing it with a USGA style construction. This novel approach clearly reduced the time and cost involved in resurfacing, utilising the decent stone carpet from the original construction and merely replaced the immediate growing medium - and it proved most successful.

Inspired by the results from the practice green, Hans was to astound everyone with his next audacious move. Fortunately, I was there to record the event when he brought a Koro Fieldtopmaker onto site and started stripping the turf and 50-60mm of thatch and rootzone from greens on the golf course!

This was a much quicker and cleaner operation than the process used for the practice green, but it still made the jaw drop! Before you decide on this course of action please note that they have 27 holes at Furesø so can afford to take a few out of play at a time. Even so, this treatment takes some courage.

Once the cleared surface had been cleaned up to remove any residual thatch the machine had missed, fresh rootzone was to be introduced and the new surface sown with fescue. Just another day in the life of a Danish greenkeeper.



The contrasting sward with dense fescue domination at Falster, reclaimed from *Poa annua*, to the left, and a more open bent/*Poa* sward in deep shade, to the right



#### BRINGING HOME THE BACON

The expansion in the number who are trying to change species composition from unsustainable swards to sustainable ones based on fescue and browntop bent to over 70 clubs in an organised way is, perhaps, the most encouraging aspect of what is happening in Denmark. 'Seeing is believing' and the potential to utilise sites as case histories to benchmark what can be achieved has to be a major promotional tool in encouraging others from far a field, beyond Denmark and, indeed, beyond northern Europe to adopt a similar approach.

The autumn of 2004 saw groups of greenkeepers and officials from Sweden and the Netherlands visit courses in Denmark. There was universal acclaim for the quality of the turf seen and the sustainability of the management required. All of this certainly applies to the UK and it would be good to think that we could apply the techniques developed by the Danes to restore fescues and bents to the greens of many courses here, which have lost them at some point in the past through a combination of golfer demand and management strategies to meet those demands.

One could argue that fescues, in particular, have been the victim of technology - the availability of mowing equipment that can cut ever closer to match the demand for pace. Ever more sophisticated fertilisers which make it easy to apply the nitrogen. Automatic irrigation systems which enable the same for water and the safety net of fungicides that helps combat the disease often caused by such intensive maintenance and the grass species it encourages.

Reversing this trend is not all plain sailing. It demands full commitment from everyone at the club. It may be the Course Manager who implements the programme but without the support of the Committee and, probably more importantly, the membership, the chances of success are not good. It can take a number of years to see significant progress, generally three to five on courses in Denmark, but here the commitment level is 100%.

If you cannot gain the trust of the members and get this change in management included in a written course policy document then the uncertainty of the regularly changing Committee may prove difficult to work around. Before you discount trying to turn back to fescue consider the alternative.

The mesh of the fungicide safety net is being cut by EU regulations. Tighter controls on water quality and use are coming in through implementation of legislation such as the Water Act 2003, derived from the EU Water Framework Directive. Cost is becoming an increasingly important factor at many clubs, as

they have to tighten their belts in the face of greater competition for members and visitors. In the UK, we may currently have the tools to keep *Poa annua* greens but for how long? Surely, no one could argue they are a truly sustainable alternative to fescue or fescue/bent turf?

The R&A definition of the sustainable golf course is: "Optimising the playing quality of the golf course in harmony with the conservation of its natural environment under economically sound management." This will strike a chord with many greenkeepers, committeemen and golfers as we consider the future of golf and golf development at home and abroad. There is no doubt that the movement in Denmark towards chemically low input turf is wholly sustainable and a lesson to us here in the UK that sometimes you have to look back to move forward.

The results obtained in Denmark should provide inspiration to all who believe in traditional greenkeeping and we know there are plenty out there who just need the encouragement of working examples. Yes, we will have to change hearts and minds, educate the golfer and the rest... but when, potentially, the very future of golfing turf is at stake, heed the warnings and take positive action before it is too late.

*The Danish Greenkeepers Association has produced a very good report on their activities. The R&A contributed funds towards its production and it is posted on [www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org).*

# Golf on the Open Road

As a new generation graduates into the world of golf, it's not all plus fours, bright green grassed courses and strict clubhouse etiquette they crave, as Gareth Jones found out.

Image a golf course with no grass, no bunkers. Picture a course without trees or water features. Reflect on a golf course with no greens, flags or actual holes. Sound like a dream, a nightmare?

Well it is actually reality. Crossgolf, as it is known, is golf but minus the numerous rules, restrictions and etiquette attached to the traditional game. In fact, there is just one rule in crossgolf - safety first. Germany is its birthplace and, like David Hasselhoff, it's big in Deutschland. In fact it has become so popular that the first crossgolf club in the country, The Natural Born Golfers, claim to have over 150,000 members worldwide, a figure that continues to rise rapidly.

In a nutshell the game is golf but not as we know it, as it is played wherever, whenever. Be it down the street, over the local construction site, on a housing estate or even on top of an office block or disused train, crossgolf can, and is, literally played wherever there is room to swing a club. During friendly rounds of the sport holes are not predetermined and are typically chosen as the

It all started in the early hours of one dull morning as a bored Torsten decided to throw a party in his hotel room. With the party flowing Torsten soon felt the urge to practice his swing - he was just starting out in the game - he withdrew his clubs and suddenly the corridor became an ideal fairway. After taming the harsh, unforgiving carpeted area Torsten shortly moved the game outside, practicing in front of an office block on a daily basis, and crossgolf was alive and kicking.

As Scotland is the home of traditional golf, Germany is the fatherland of crossgolf and the biggest tournament in the sport has just been held in the country. In a six city tour, crossgolfers fought it out for the much coveted NBG Iron Cup, the holy grail of the sport. Hamburg, Cologne, Frankfurt, Munich, Leipzig and Berlin hosted the third annual tournament, which allowed 60



There is only one rule in crossgolf - safety first!

game progresses, with the length of the hole varying dramatically from a simple cheeky chip across a road to a mighty drive over a run-down factory. It is also not uncommon for a crossgolfer to be aiming for his ball to hit a target rather than sinking neatly down a hole. Like most things in the sport, these targets really can be anything, from hitting a rubbish bin, to a graffiti letter on a wall, to an abandoned car.

Historians of the game of golf may conclude that crossgolf itself stems back to the beginnings of the original game, when Scottish shepherds used to hit rocks around their pastures with sticks, however the modern game of crossgolf had a characteristically bizarre birth. An individual by the name of Torsten Schilling is the man responsible for bringing this new form of golf to the masses, but even the man with the great imagination surely could not have envisaged how far the game would come from such simple beginnings.



No dress code is required in the game

entrants into each of the six events. Over 1,200 people applied to play in the final stage in Berlin alone, which provides a startling scale of how popular the game has become.

Obviously it wouldn't be crossgolf without a different scoring system. In fact there is no scoring at all, instead tournament officials award prizes and trophies based on their own fanciful standards. In the NBG Iron Cup the trophy winners are decided in categories such as Style, Hardest Try and Best Entertainment. "Fun is always to be the centre of attention. With us it does not concern, in principle, points of league or sporty maximum output. Also there is no dress order and no handicap," said Torsten Schilling, crossgolf's creator and head of the Natural Born Golfers.

Why this extreme version of golf has become so fashionable in the land that has provided the world with golfing great Bernard Langer and European Tour



Imagine this tee shot at your club!

pro Alex Cejka is due to one underlining factor, the lack of public courses in the country. While the game becomes more accessible in numerous nations across the globe, in Germany golf remains an elite and expensive pastime. To play golf participants, firstly, must be licensed and then the cost of membership to a private golf club normally prices the majority of wannabe golfers out of the sport before they can even think of swinging a nine iron in anger.

Crossgolf might sound somewhat surreal, particularly to golfing traditionalists, but since its inception its popularity has spread across Europe faster than Michael Schumacher's Ferrari. Even the British are getting into the explosive game, where it is more commonly known as Urban Golf. The UK held its first Crossgolf Tournament in May 2004, which witnessed a field, including Ryder Cup player Ronan Rafferty, of over 64 men and women, who participated in a round through the streets of London.

Unlike the NBG Iron Cup, The UK's Shoreditch Urban Open, organised by disillusioned golfer Jeremy Feakes, closely resembled a true golfing competition with official scoring, a watered down dress code, holes with par and even caddies. The tournament saw urban golfers play their shots off AstroTurf mats,



There is no debate about women playing against men in this extreme version of golf

traditional holes were replaced by adopted manholes and cars acted as water hazards.

Other crossgolf locations include Barcelona, Paris, Kuala Lumpur and Warsaw, while future events are scheduled for Budapest and Shanghai. Even the Americans have got into the game, with the Urban Golf Association based in San Francisco - who said the Yanks only play golf on bright green grassed courses, with colourful, flourishing backdrops? The sport has now become so successful and its status has grown so considerably that plans are afoot to stage a massive 14 city World Tour by the end of 2006, which will bring with it its own unique difficulties.

"We never realised when we started organising these big events just how many problems we would face. In Germany it is no problem to gain permission to hold an event in a city. However in other countries we have had some



A crossgolf buggy, slightly different to what you would see on a traditional course

problems getting permission to play. It can take a lot of hard work to get all the right paperwork, etc together and get everyone to agree to let us play, but it is all worth it in the end," explained Torsten.

Favorite locations for crossgolf courses characteristically are big areas with distinctive landmarks, which allows tough and interesting holes containing numerous obstacles to be played, while also limiting the risk of hitting a passerby, but even these sites can cause certain predicaments.

"Recently in Spain we had a whole tournament planned to be staged at a major harbor. Then at the last minute it was announced that soldiers and sailors from the Iraq War were coming back on the same day as the tournament. When we got to the harbor to play huge wire fences had been erected and we just couldn't get anywhere near the course to play."

Torsten, who at the time of inventing the game worked as a television set designer, rapidly realised the game's potential and left his job to concentrate his efforts on developing crossgolf as a business. As well as competitions, he organises corporate events for major multinational companies, which include Volkswagen, IBM, Microsoft and American Express. Not surprisingly when



Vast areas such as construction yards make a great crossgolf course

whacking golf balls through the streets of a major city Torsten takes out liability insurance for all crossgolf events and tournaments, but as yet there has never been an injury, proving the game's only rule, safety first, is always adhered to.

"Our slogan is golf when, as and where one wants and the game is played for pleasure and enjoyment above anything else," stated Torsten.

Fun and enjoyment are certainly the order of the day with this sport. Fancy dress and loud clothing is often spotted at events - mainly in the US - and crates of bottled beer are never too far away from a crossgolf course. In the NBG Iron Cup it is a must that: "The last tournament ball is always played in a bar or another party-suited mechanism."

That sums it all perfectly. Crossgolf is a sport that is played for no other reason than pure, unadulterated fun, something that can only be a good thing in today's world of rules and regulations.

# NEW PRODUCTS

## THE RAT PACK



STV, the poison-free pest control specialist, has highlighted its range of products designed to deter rodents and other pests, including traps and electronic repellers.



Available in a four-pack design, the recently launched Sonic Mouse and Rat Repellers simply plug into an electric socket and round-the-clock protection is assured. Each unit guards an area of at least 400 square feet, so a pack of four can protect four

rooms with a combined area of 1600 square feet.

Also available from STV is a cage trap manufactured from galvanised wire mesh with single entry drop door and featuring a carrier handle and protective hand-plate for easy transportation.

Simple to set with clear instructions and setting tips on the pack, the traps are suitable for indoor or outdoor use, and can be used for the care and control of all small animals.

For further information Tel: 01953 881580.

## KUBOTA UNVEIL DIESEL MOWERS

Kubota has introduced two diesel ride-on mowers. Known as the GR1600 and GR2100, the two aerodynamically designed machines are powered by Kubota E-TVCS - three vortex combustion system - diesel engines rated at 13.5hp and 21hp respectively.

The GR2100 is packed with many of the features found on Kubota's range of commercial diesel ride-on mowers. These include a three-cylinder water-cooled engine, shaft-driven hydrostatic transmission (HST) with single pedal control, all-wheel drive, hydraulic power steering and shaft-drive to its mid-mounted 1.22m (48in) wide rotary cutter deck.

A new feature included for the first time on the GR2100 is Kubota's Glide Steer system which automatically disengages drive to the inside rear wheel when the front wheels' turning angle reaches 70 degrees. By allowing the inner rear wheel to spin freely as the outer wheel powers the mower through its turn, surface damage is avoided. This system also enables the GR2100 mower to leave an uncut circle of grass measuring just 110cm at full lock.

Other output-enhancing features on the GR2100 include simple dial-type cutting height adjustment from 25mm to 102mm (1in - 4in), hydraulically-powered deck lift and a full flat operator's platform with suspension seat and ergonomic control layout.

For further information Tel: 01844 268111.



## A FAIR WAY SOLUTION

A Fair Way Solution Ltd is supplying a new concept called a Divot Bag to all golf clubs in the UK and Europe. The bag would be attached to a player's golf bag and filled with a mixture of the greenkeeper's choice. The player would then use the contents of the bag to fill divots on the fairways while playing.

On numerous occasions, when a player repairs a divot they fail to take and die within their hole, and many times a divot taken by a player splits into smaller pieces and is impossible to replace. This is what contributes to scarred fairways and, this is where the divot bag comes in to use.

A further benefit of the bags is security, as they can be supplied in a variety of colours. This enables all staff on the course to identify who is using it and challenge those not displaying the correct bag.

Divot bags are currently used in South Africa and are a compulsory part of playing at all clubs there. Research conducted using young and old golfers, including prohibiting the use of a trolley, concluded that the bags do not become an unnecessary hindrance.

For further information Tel: 020 84026003.



## THE FOUR MIX ADVANTAGE

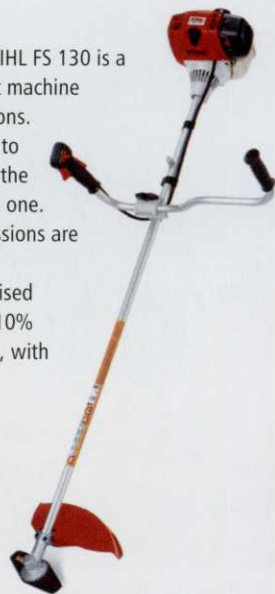
Driven by the STIHL four-mix engine, the new STIHL FS 130 is a powerful, professional, eco-friendly and lightweight machine available in both loop and bike handled configurations.

The four-mix is the first STIHL four-stroke engine to be driven by a conventional fuel/oil mix, combining the benefits of two-stroke and four-stroke technology in one. Compared to an equivalent two-stroke engine, emissions are significantly reduced.

Advantages of the pre-mixed fuel include minimised weight and the four-MDC engine produces around 10% more power than an equivalent capacity four-stroke, with power-to-weight ratio improved by around 25%.

After starting, a 1.65Nm torque ensures ample power to drive a choice of cutting tools from the AutoCut C mowing head supplied as standard, to accessory metal blades and even a circular saw blade for trimming gnarled bushes and thin tree trunks.

For further information Tel: 0800 137574.



## FINE GROOMING

Sisis have introduced a new implement for use with the Quadraplay, Twinplay and Singleplay multi-purpose, turf maintenance systems.

The Sisis Fine Grooming Rake is available 183cm (6ft) or 240cm (8ft) wide and is designed for light scarification on soccer pitches and other outfield turf during the summer months and for golf fairways.

For further information Tel: 01625 503030.





## YAMAHA LAUNCH UTILITY VEHICLE

The new Yamaha G23 UMAX utility vehicle brings to the market a versatile, flexible, all-purpose machine designed to offer outstanding performance and reliability for a multitude of uses. Available in either petrol or electric versions, the utility vehicle boasts many features and benefits to meet the demands of the utility vehicle market.

The 363kg payload cargo bed comes with a folding tailgate, prop rod and hydraulic assisted tilt and fold facility and is constructed in a lightweight durable Roto-moulded rattle-free material.

For continuous control and safety the Yamaha machine features self adjusting drum brakes on all wheels. Combining the independent front suspension, featuring individual coil springs, and hydraulic shock absorbers and the Mono-link rear suspension with springs and hydraulic shocks a strong and balanced machine is assured.

The strength of the vehicle is also highlighted by the Robotic welded, tubular steel frame, protected by an 18 step paint process. The new Yamaha G23 UMAX has many more standard features, including headlights, taillights, and independent front strut suspension, tow-hitch, DC power outlet and four wheel brakes.

For further information Tel: 01932 358097.

## NEED FOR SPEED

The new Speedseed 1600, from Charterhouse Turf Machinery, enables greenkeepers to overseed more quickly without sacrificing accuracy. Powered by a tractor of 20hp with a minimum lift capacity of 500kg, the 1.6m-wide (63in) unit has individual cast spiked rings that enable it to make turns during operation.

The application rate is adjusted via a system of gear wheels and seed falls only when the side wheel of the Speedseed 1600 is turning, so there is no risk of spillage when the machine is at rest or moved between sites. A rubber roller at the bottom of the hopper enables fine seed to be applied.

The spikes are conical shaped so that seed is placed accurately into the holes. This unique shape means turf damage is minimised while the depth of penetration is increased and more soil is exposed to maximise germination. The Speedseed can achieve a rate of 940 holes per m<sup>3</sup> and a second spiked roller can be fitted to increase this further to 1,850 holes per m<sup>3</sup>. The Speedseed 1600's random dispersal of seed is ideal for sports pitches and fairways, since there is no risk of unsightly drill lines being created.

For further information Tel: 01428 661222.



## LIGHTNING NEVER STRIKES TWICE

Lightning confronting golfers may not be the first hazard that springs to mind but it is very easy to forget just how dangerous and potentially lethal it can be. The lightning rod effect of tall trees and people exposed in the open is well known but often overlooked when considering Health and Safety issues on a golf course.

For many years both The R&A and the PGA European Tour have recognised lightning as a threat to players and spectators alike.

Hydroscape's lightning detection system employs state-of-the art technology to address the most demanding of lightning safety and equipment protection applications. The system, under the brand name of Strike Guard, continuously monitors an area up to 30 miles distance from the golf course in all directions, looking for either cloud-to-cloud or cloud-to-ground lightning and providing lightning contact signaling at user-set activity thresholds.

Patented optical signal processing and proprietary optical-coincidence technology prevent false alarms. Sensor data is communicated via lightning proof fibre optic cable to an independent lightning data receiver with system status and both visual and audible alarms. Data can also be routed to a PC, where historic information can be accumulated.

For further information Tel: 01425 476261.



## THE POWARYDER

The very latest in electric technology in golf transport has been revealed. The three wheel all-terrain, stand on golf trolley is perfect for all golf users, young and old, and carries golf bags and players across all playing surfaces with comfort and ease.

The Powaryder, with powerful 500w brushed electric hub motor and easy-to-use twist grip throttle on the handlebars, neatly folds up making it simple to transport and easy to store in the boot of a car.

But why choose the Powaryder over a conventional electric golf buggy? The two main benefits are that you can actually stand on it and complete all 18 holes without feeling exhausted, without damaging playing surfaces.

As golf continues to enjoy a rise in players, particularly from younger enthusiasts, players are looking for new innovations to increase the ease and style of the game. Golf courses are also very encouraging of the new Powaryder as it will decrease wear and tear on many golf courses.

For further information  
Tel: 01225 443737.





## News from the Chief Executive

Having recently returned from the Association of Golf Club Secretaries' Conference, in Liverpool, I was heartened by the positive manner in which the ACGS and BIGGA are moving closer together to develop the management roles in today's golf club. I had the opportunity to listen to presentations and talk with fellow delegates on such subjects as Health and Safety, Employment Law, Communication and Personal Presentation Skills, issues common to both the Secretary/Manager and the Course Manager. I also represented BIGGA on an 'Ask the Panel' question and answer session where I sat alongside representatives from the ACGS, the Home Unions, the R&A and the PGA, this once again gave the Association the opportunity to be seen to be working with some of the other major bodies in British golf.

Over the last 15 months BIGGA has been involved in consultative meetings for the development of a Whole Sport Plan for golf in England by the England Golf Partnership. The aim of the plan is to increase access to golf for more people, increase participation in the sport and membership of clubs and also to improve performance by both amateur and professional golfers alike.

There is Government funding available for the development of sport generally and it is hoped that some of this can be directed towards our industry. The final document was publicly launched in April and a copy can be obtained by contacting Rachael or Brad at BIGGA Headquarters.

There is growing concern over the future of pesticides, etc in the UK and I would like to allay any thoughts that BIGGA is not doing anything about the situation. We are a member of the Amenity Forum, Chaired by Jon Allbutt (Health and Safety consultant), which comprises of representatives from a wide range of interested bodies in industry, amenity activities as well as environmental and government agencies.

The role of the Amenity Forum is several fold: 1) To be available to government and industry as a consultative body; 2) To promote a Voluntary Initiative on environmental management with particular reference to the use of pesticides; 3) To act as a collective lobbying body to government.

More information can be found on their website, [www.amenity.org.uk](http://www.amenity.org.uk). There are also two leaflets available from BIGGA HQ that members may find of interest. These concern the National Sprayer Testing Scheme and The National Register of Sprayer Operators. The work of the Amenity Forum and the pesticide 'issue' will be featured in Greenkeeper International in the near future.

BTME and ClubHouse has again come in for some negative and inaccurate reporting in a certain publication, as has the role that some organisations play in the development of today's golf. What a pity the editor chooses not to do his homework otherwise he would have discovered that far from resting on its laurels BIGGA is in fact quite active and the above cases that I have quoted are only a few of the initiatives that it is involved with behind the scenes.

Amenity Technology's Managing Director, Carl Crome, in his publication has denounced the value of exhibitions and quotes that his company's absence at SALTEX has not been noticed by visitors. Will greenkeepers miss him when he is not at BTME 2006? We'll have to wait and see, in the meanwhile the exhibitor base for next year continues to grow and a much more intensive and expansive education programme is planned for what has become known as 'The Harrogate Week'.

**John Pemberton**

## SECTION NOTES INFORMATION

In order to improve the sending and receiving of Section Notes, where possible can all future notes be emailed to [gareth@bigga.co.uk](mailto:gareth@bigga.co.uk) by no later than the 5th of the month prior to publication please.

You will receive an email back to confirm receipt of your notes. If you do not receive this confirmation please get in touch with BIGGA Headquarters.

### SCOTTISH REGION

The 2005 Scottish National Tournament will be held at McDonald Golf Club, Ellon, Aberdeenshire, on Thursday June 23 by kind permission of the Captain and Committee. The cost of the event will be £20, which includes coffee/tea, filled roll, evening meal and prizes.

Entry forms are available at all Section Spring Outings and from the Regional Administrator.

All entries, with remittance, must be sent to the Regional Administrator, Peter J. Boyd, 10 Meadowburn Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 6TA, by Monday June 13. Cheques made payable to BIGGA Scottish Region.

Peter J. Boyd

### North

No new members to report this month, it usually quiets down about this time.

There are a few of our members moving on or moving up this month. Two of these are at Newmacher GC, where George Mitchell and Patrick Wood have become Head Greenkeepers at the Hawkshill course and the Swailend course respectively. George and Patrick have been rewarded for many years of loyal service at Newmacher and fully deserve their promotion.

A greenkeeper on the move is Roger Martin, formerly of Reay GC, who is now back at his old club, Peterhead, as First Assistant. Good luck to these guys in their new positions.

Malcolm Macdonald, formerly of Kingussie GC, turned 80 a few months back and is still going stronger than ever. Good to see him looking so well. Stevie Sullivan and Stuart Robertson, of Craigie Hill GC, represented our Section in the annual Secretaries versus Greenkeepers match held at Royston GC. They won their match and so did the Greenkeeper team.

There are still 200 club tickets that have not been returned, if any members are not interested in renewing them could you please return them to Hugh Mclatchie at 24 Whitehill Place, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, AB42 2FU.

The outing at Murcar is on May 12 and hopefully the weather will hold up and the event will be well supported. The results will be in next month's report.

I don't know about the weather at all the other clubs in the area but at Strathpeffer it has been the wettest autumn, winter and spring I can remember. Hopefully things will dry up soon.

If there is anything you, as a member, would like to see in the report then by all means phone me on 01997420155.

Iain Gunn





NORTHERN REGION

**North East**

Congratulations are in order for David Cuthbertson, formerly Deputy Head Greenkeeper to become the Course Manager at Slaley Hall GC. David has been temporarily in charge since the departure of Steve Cram to Close House GC.



Well the long debate over the 14th hole at Hexham GC is finally over, the golf club sent out a postal ballot to the members on how they would like the hole to be played. Just to let you know what it was all about, a car dealer moved into empty premises running aside the 14th green several months ago. Unfortunately stray shots were going over a 30ft hedge and hitting cars, rather expensive ones, like shoguns, etc. The options for the club were either reduce the length of the hole by nearly 100yds or put up a 20 metre fence. Well the vote turned out to go for the fence that, by the time you read this, should be completed. If anyone has played Hexham this was the best option, as the hole would have ended up as a Mickey Mouse hole, going from a good par 4 to a stupid hole.

Well ballots must be the thing these days as members at Whickham GC were also asked to vote on the way they would like to play the course with the two new holes in play now and which ones to do away with. Well the 5th and 13th par three's are to be omitted to make way for a par 5 and a par 4, which will add some length to this testing course.

Ryton GC is having a bit of controversy over some recent winter work in front of the 2nd tee box. Apparently the local environmentalist is not a happy person as they have disturbed an endangered species of the greater crested newt. We will just have to wait and see what happens, as I believe you can be fined a large amount of money for something like this.

Jimmy Richardson

**North West**

It's that time again, time for the Section notes I mean. The last month has gone so quickly and a lack of information coming in makes it difficult to find something to write about, but I will share with you what little there is.



The N/W Section played the N/Wales Section in the annual match on April 5 at Wilmslow GC. The match was once again sponsored by GEM Professional, who has sponsored this event since 1991. The result was a win for the N/W with a score of 3.5 to 2.5. Many thanks to GEM for their support and Wilmslow GC for allowing us courtesy of the course. I have mentioned in the past that this competition is open to any N/W member to play regardless of how good or bad your golf is, so next time why not have a go.

The Spring Tournament will be played at Whitefield GC, on Wednesday May 25. Lunch will be 12 to 12.30 and tee time will be from 1.30pm onwards. Applications to Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU, Tel: 01695 632883, including a cheque for £20 payable to BIGGA N/W Section. Closing date is Friday May 20.

We now have seven patrons for the Section and these are Rolawn, John Greasley, Bathgate, Cheshire Turf Machinery, Strike top Turf, Acorn Golf, and Alpha Amenity. Without the support from the sponsors the prize table at the tournaments would look pretty sick, so please support them. The

Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin prizes at the tournaments this year will be sponsored by Bathgate.

I must mention that BIGGA HQ and myself have had complaints about people asking for courtesy golf and they are not members of BIGGA. This could cause problems if it continues, so can I ask you all to advise the professionals to demand to see membership cards before allowing courtesy.

I cannot think of anything more at the moment but if you have any news or require advice ring me on 0151 724 5412 or 07761 583 387.

Bert Cross

MIDLAND REGION

**East Midland**

Congratulations this month go to Stuart Raybould, of Greatham Valley GC, for his promotion to First Assistant Greenkeeper.



Our golf fixtures for this year are as follows. Spring Tournament, Melton Mowbray, Wednesday May 18; Summer Tournament, Cosby, Thursday July 7; AGM, Norwood Park, Wednesday November 2; Christmas, Charnwood Forest, Thursday December 15. The spring and summer combined will be a National Tournament qualifier.

The committee do hope to see as many members as possible supporting these days. If you require an entry form please give me a ring or email me about a month before the competition as no forms will be posted.

Next year's spring tournament will be held at Stanton-on-the Wolds GC. Can anybody remember the last time we visited the course for a Section event? No prizes for the correct answer. Finally, if anybody has any news they would like to see in this article, please let me know.

Antony Bindley

**East of England**

Well, here goes, my first attempt at journalism! Hopefully, by the time this goes to print, winter is well and truly behind us along with the Six Nations. As a Scotsman we have had better years, the only consolation being that England were almost as bad.



Now, down to business. Our Section seminar was held at Newark Golf Club, home of none other than Twinkle Toes MacDonald. Surprisingly, he was on time, it must have been the free coffee or he'd run out of dance partners. Our thanks go to Philip Threadgold, Charterhouse, Mike Pinney, AmegA Science, Alan White and Midlube.

An enjoyable day was had by all who attended, although it was a poor turnout. Come on guys, we have to make the effort! If there are any topics or ideas you have to suggest for seminars please feel free. If you don't tell us we won't know what you want.

The golf dates are as follows: April 26, Sleaford Golf Club; May 24, Cleethorpes Gold Club; June 30, Burghley Park Golf Club; July 20, Immmgham Golf Club. The rest of the dates will follow in a later issue as they are still to be confirmed.

Finally, if anyone has any news, contact me on my mobile, 07974 816927.

PS. Cheer up Posh fans, life could be worse as I'm an egg chasing Scottish supporter.

*Editors Note: You and me both!*

Allan Walker



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## BB&O

Golf, the Golden Years! As the best of the BB&O took on the delights of East Berks GC, which was host to the Spring National Qualifier Competition, on April 7. Testing conditions were applied by the occasional shower of hailstones and the sudden downpour from the heavens. However, the course stood up well to the elements and provided us with a challenging venue to start the year.

The results were as follows: 1. Carl Small, Ellesborough GC, (disabled) net 68; 2. Paul Harding, East Berks GC; net 74; 3. Frank Booth, Retired, net 75. Matt Smith, of Sonning GC, picked up The Tacit Claret Jug with a gross 73 and also went on to snatch Nearest the Pin with a wonderful iron shot in testing conditions. Paul Harding, with local knowledge of the course and remembering his Weetabix, hit a monster shot to secure the Longest Drive. John Ryan, from Browns, donning a large sombrero and six-gun, took the trade prize with a 74.

James Moore, from Turners, was unable to attend, and with help from John Scoones held a putting green competition, which was well received. We look forward to seeing James, at Henley GC, in the summer continuing to organise this challenging event.

To our main sponsor of the day, Tim Webb, from Tacit, and all the other trade supporters, we thank you for supporting our first event in 2005. A big thank you to East Berks GC for the courtesy of the course and the catering department for their gastronomic delights, which were well received and to Course Manager, Mark Piggott, and his staff for ensuring the course was fantastic and prepared to a first class standard. Our next event is on June 30 at Henley GC. Make a note of it in the diary before you forget.

Bob the Builder, otherwise known as Vince Riches, Handicap Secretary, has done a grand job of always organising the Section handicaps and getting the start times collated with the scorecards on the day. If any Section member wishes to speak with Vince regarding a handicap certificate or handicap matters he can be contacted on 07899 865 555.

Casanova Colin, from Wycombe Heights GC, together with his bagpipes, has recently moved into the penthouse suite above the clubhouse. Casa, as he is now known, is always after a birdie, but sadly the ladies behind the bar keep giving him a no return on his scorecard, and now all you can hear is the drone of his bagpipes in the early evening.

Congratulations to Colin Hutt, from Donnington Grove GC. After several years as Deputy Course Manager he leaves Rosco and the team to make a fresh start as Course Manager at Basingstoke GC, in Hampshire. Dominic, from Datchet GC, sends his apologies for not attending the last golf day as he is now hooked on Kylie Minogue, temptation was too great and he could not resist going to the concert. Having said that, Gareth Acteson was caught buying tickets to see Barry Manilow.

The Annual Rigby Taylor Match Play Knockout will now be well underway and the organiser, Gareth Acteson, will always be on hand to see that things run smoothly, with results of the first round to be published in next month's report. Gareth can be contacted on 07734 856 924.

Section news has slowly been dribbling in from far and wide over the three counties and 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 07880 550 380.

Sorry, I forgot to mention our good friend, T. H. White, who sponsors our

