

# Turf, Turf Everywhere

Fine turf is popping up in the strangest of places thanks to new technology, as Gareth Jones found out.

The global population is ever increasing. There are over 6.8 billion living souls in the world, at the time of writing, although some of that figure will resemble more zombie than human as they attempted to recover from another exhilarating, successful and hectic Harrogate Week. With this continually rising amount of people needing somewhere to rest their weary heads, the demand for new housing has dramatically exploded. These dwellings have to be built somewhere and as a result it's not poa annua that should be feared of dominating our grass types - its concrete.

Large green fields are becoming extinct as grey carpets of cement are laid across the globe as the base for new urban jungles. Schools are selling their playing fields - poor little Jimmy has nowhere to practice his football anymore - and farmers are releasing their property to developers to solve income troubles. It all adds up. Currently, the backdrop to many lives is not colourful natural fields - it's dark man made walls. We are at a very real point where the only way to see grass is next to a Viking relic in a natural history museum.

The good news is that the turf is fighting back. Fed up with being destroyed by concrete, the green is now taking over the grey. Advances in technology have resulted in a resurgence of grass in previous barren areas of large cities. New turf products, such as Lindum's Grassfelt, mean that lovely soft turf can be laid practically anywhere - brightening up otherwise dull, dead land.

Being grown on a biodegradable felt has resulted in grass becoming a living carpet - a feature that can be utilised wherever you care to look. It is not just the obvious areas, such as the golf course or football pitch, that are benefiting from an injection of new technology in fine turf. Places where you would never have dreamt turf could be laid are now covered in lush green grass. That's just the way we like it!



Yum, a nice big Wedding Cake - This grass sculpture can be found in the courtyard of the Marriott Hotel, Westminster



Lindum's Grassfelt used in steel sculptures as part of Yorkshire Forward's 'The Green' project



Anyone for tennis?



This courtyard looks so much better with a nice living sward



Fine turf isn't just for the golf course - it really can do anything



You aren't seeing things - that really is grass in the middle of London





# Can you beat this?



Loch Lomond, courtesy of Brian Morgan

Look out for the launch of BIGGA's new golf photography competition in next month's issue!



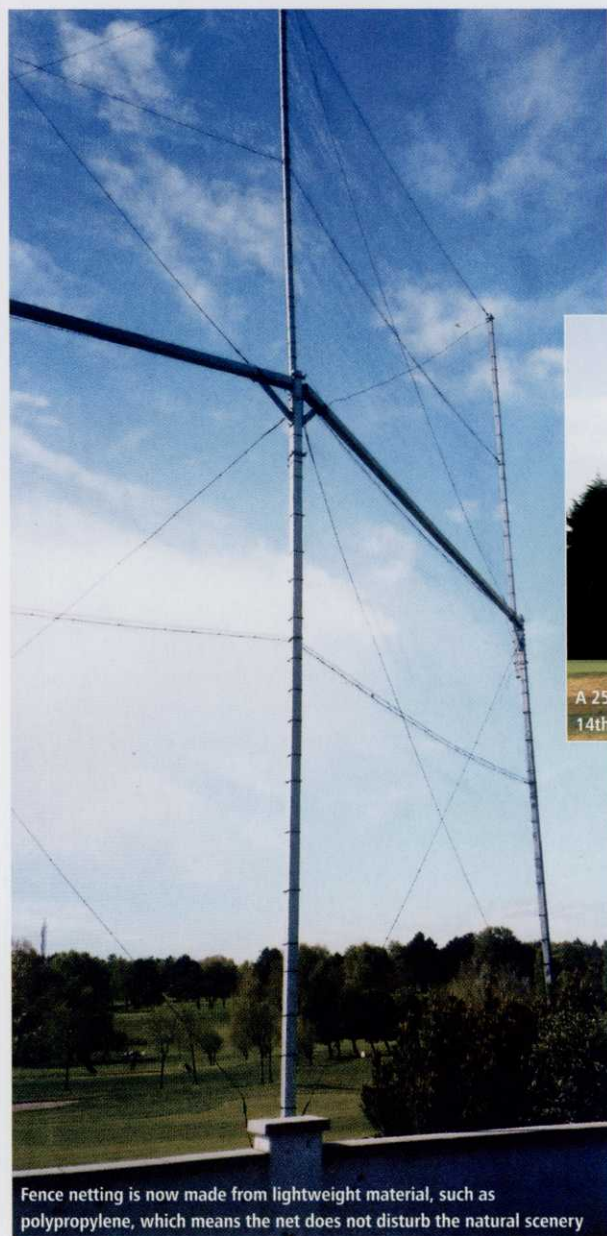
# All Caught Up!

Gareth Jones rigs himself up as he takes a look at the protective netting that can be installed at golf clubs to solve those tricky health and safety dilemmas.

Being a novice golfer, and that's putting it the nice way, I have a major error within my swing that causes my ball to dramatically fly off to the right. If facing a cruel dogleg it's wonderful to see your soaring Titleist arcing majestically around the protruding hazard to the awaiting green. However, when you are attempting to hit the damn thing straight down the middle of the fairway it's not pride and joy I feel but embarrassment and anger.

My personal golfing troubles and dented esteem apart, this is actually a very serious health and safety issue at the majority of golf clubs. While a player losing ball after ball as he slices out of bounds might mean great business for the pro shop, it could mean a hefty law suit landing on the doormat of the golf club.

On the course both greenkeepers and players are at risk from misplaced shots. Often a muffled cry of Fore does not provide the needed time to dive behind the trusty utility vehicle to avoid the oncoming missile. Driving ranges can be even more dangerous.



Fence netting is now made from lightweight material, such as polypropylene, which means the net does not disturb the natural scenery

Beginners or seasonal players testing their brand new Big Bertha that they got from Santa are happy to spend all their time seeing how far they can hit it. Surely the further the ball goes the better player you are? Practice balls fly left, right but rarely centre and so the range must be safely sealed to protect the rest of the club and it's fragile members.

Passing pedestrians, neighbours and traffic are not safe either. A modest connection from even the weakest of golfer can send a ball looping high, wide and handsome out of the course and into somebody's skull or through a neighbour's window. Hexham Golf Club were recently involved in this scenario.

The opening of a new car dealership behind the 14th green meant that the club had a decision to make - shorten the hole by 90 yards or erect a ball stop fence. The choice was an easy one; with a 20m by 90m long fence being created that contained a 25mm by 25mm green mesh netting.

"We were able to work with the greenkeepers to minimise any course impact. The end result is an extremely high fence that Hexham can be are proud of," recalled Lawrence Green, of Tildenet, who installed the fence.

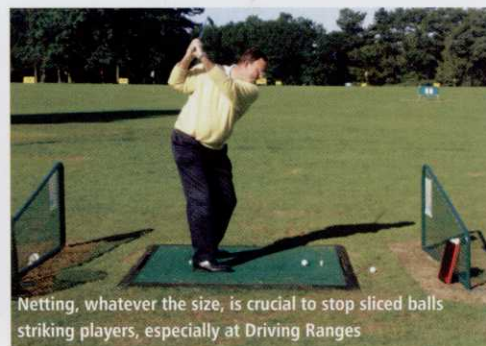
This protective netting is a major way to solve the predicament of the famed but feared 150 yard slice. Fencing has become a vital necessity for any club wanting to shield passing pedestrians, vehicles and property from wayward golf balls.



A 25mm mesh fence protects the car dealership located behind the 14th at Hexham Golf Club

Traditionally knotted nets have been used for this purpose, with specialist fencing companies, such as Tenax, stating that this is "a must when providing protection from high impact shots". However, large runs of knotted netting can become very heavy and be difficult to install. An increase in the weight of the nets means stronger support fixings are required and these need regularly maintaining.

Many net fencing systems are now created using lightweight materials, such as polypropylene. This eliminates many of the concerns related to knotting netting, including damage caused by differing weather conditions. These can be easier to fit and have lower maintenance requirements, although any type of net fencing should be



Netting, whatever the size, is crucial to stop sliced balls striking players, especially at Driving Ranges

examined frequently to spot wear, damage and holes.

So erect that fence to halt those ill timed sliced shots shooting out of your course, before you find yourself building a barrier around it to stop all those injured, complaining neighbours getting in.



# Made to Measure

Scott MacCallum travelled to Cornwall to meet BIGGA's new Chairman, Richard Whyman.

It goes without saying that being the Chairman of an Association like BIGGA requires a certain amount of communication skill – the ability to make impromptu speeches on all subjects at the drop of a hat and the capacity to chat with members at every stage in their career, as well as top officials of greenkeeping and golfing bodies from all over the world.

So when Richard Whyman says, and indeed demonstrates, that he, “can talk for England”, and that 16 years as Devon and Cornwall Section Secretary have taught him to think and speak on his feet you get the strong suspicion that he is ready made for the job of BIGGA Chairman.

Richard is very well aware of the type of person he is, the style of Chairmanship he will employ and how his strengths differ from his predecessor as Chairman, Kerran Daly.

“Kerran has written in the magazine, and on the website, very well and has put in train the new Secretaries’ Website page which, once it is being utilised fully, will become an extremely useful tool for the Association. I’m a social, communicative person who prefers to talk with people and that’s how I will learn what’s going on in the Association,” said Richard, as we sat in the upstairs lounge of Bude and North Cornwall Golf Club, which had just hosted a Devon and Cornwall Section event, and which had been his place of work for 18 years.

For the last three years he has been Head Greenkeeper at the prestigious Burnham and Berrow Golf Club, in Somerset, widely regarded as one of the finest links in the south west of the country, a fact reinforced by the fact that during his Chairmanship year Richard will be preparing the course for the English Amateur Championship.

“I’d been extremely happy at Bude for 18 years but Burnham and Berrow was one of the few jobs in the south west which could have tempted me.

“When it came up I talked it over with my wife, Denise, and I thought that at 43 if I didn’t take the opportunity it might not come up again. It was the right time as my son, who has recently joined the greenkeeping staff at Carden Park, was just finishing school and my daughter was about to go to university. The easiest decision would have been not to move but I would have been here today and in my comfort zone,” said Richard, who was made a life member of the club when he left and who spent the Section Day catching up with many of his old members who recognised him and just wanted to say hello.

Richard’s entry into the greenkeeping profession came two years after he had taken up the game of golf at 14, he decided that he’d had enough of school at 16. A reluctance to work in a factory and a keen desire to work outside drew him to another of the fine south west links courses, Saunton, where he began as an apprentice.

“I’m a Devonian, born and bred in Barnstaple, and I started playing golf with my dad, who was returning to the game after a layoff. We joined Ilfracombe – Saunton was closer but prestigious and expensive to join – and, although I was never going to be a great golfer, I caught the bug.”

At Saunton he first worked under David Rawlins, and then Brian Summers and began his greenkeeper education.

“I started at the local technical college in Barnstaple but the golf club wanted a more greenkeeper orientated course for me so I did my City and Guilds on one of the first greenkeeper courses in the country at Warwickshire College.



“The course was still feeling its way. I remember one machinery lesson where we were picking up hay bales off the sports field,” he smiled.

When he was 21 he moved on, becoming Deputy Head at Lee on the Solent, home club to one of BIGGA’s most well loved characters and supporters.

“Jim Fry [a BIGGA Honorary Member] was the Chairman of Green when I was there and he used to drive us to Section events in the South Coast Section in his Roller. It was great pulling up at a golf club in a Rolls Royce, climbing out and going into a Section event.”

The lure of his beloved Devon and Cornwall drew him back to the job of Head man at Bude and North Cornwall, although the move was tinged with a little regret.

“When I left Lee and Solent were just about to start quite a bit of construction work and I would have enjoyed becoming involved with that,” said Richard, who despite his West Country roots is an avid Leeds United supporter, borne out of the Yorkshire side’s early 70s dominance in his formative years.

But the prodigal son returned, on the same day as the Brighton bomb nearly wiped out Margaret Thatcher and the Tory Government of October 1984, and his Association work was about to begin.

“When I returned it was still the BGGGA and I sat on committees quite quickly both on BGGGA and subsequently BIGGA. Gordon Child was Section Chairman at the time and he nurtured me along. I soon became Chairman





myself, although I never had any real desire to move forward with BIGGA. It just happened."

To demonstrate just how that works Richard explained that, when Chairman, he was called by the Section Secretary at the time, Jim Wood, to say he was leaving the industry to work for the War Graves Commission and he wanted to drop off the Section stationary.

"All of a sudden I was left with all this stuff and I'd become Section Secretary. I'll always remember my first meeting. It was at Teignmouth GC and I was worried. I had about 50 people turning up and I had to organise golf, meals, meet the speaker and then make a speech myself, all of which was new to me. I spent the night before rehearsing my speech which, by midnight, was driving my wife mad. It all went very well and when that happens you get a real buzz. I'm sure Don [Hunt, the D&C Section Secretary] got a buzz out of having 52 here today."

As Richard progressed in the role he became more and more proficient and, by his own admission, he enjoyed every minute of it.

"Although it took up a lot of time – I do gas for England, it's one of my failings – when I used to chase people up I couldn't just throw down the phone I had to have a chat about how things were and when I had 10 calls to make it could take all night."

He gave up the role when he moved to Burnham and Berrow, although he remained a member of the Devon and Cornwall Section, but he admits it was probably good for him to step back because much as his time at Bude and North Cornwall he was in a comfort zone.

"Meetings were much simpler to run by the end and the speeches just rolled off the tongue," he said.

"The biggest thing for me of being Section Secretary was that I learned how to use a computer. That has been very useful to me and I don't know if I'd be able to use a computer like I do today if I hadn't been Section Secretary," said Richard, who also credits the role as the reason he has made so many contacts within the industry and met so many people, including the Duke of York, whom he was introduced to at the opening of BIGGA HOUSE.

The call, which was eventually to lead to the Chairmanship of the Association, came one August evening in 2004.

"I'd just finished a barbecue with the family, and enjoyed a couple of beers, when the phone rang and it was Kerran inviting me to become his Vice Chairman. I had to think long and hard about it as it is a big commitment. I spoke with my wife, daughter, Nikki and son, Andrew, who were very keen and then the golf club and I was pleasantly surprised at how supportive they were, particularly when I explained the time commitment required."

So what sort of Chairman will he be and what does he want to achieve?

"As I said I'm a social guy and I'd very much like to visit every Region and meet as many people as I can but I do have work constraints, including that English Amateur Championship, and I might not get to as many functions as, ideally, I'd like.

"I'd like communication to improve and particularly from member to Headquarters because it is a two way thing and members must feed back as if HQ gets nothing back it will stop being fed down," said Richard, who

will also be doing whatever he can during his year in office to ensure a successful Harrogate Week 2007.

Another of his aims is to create a means for the next generation of Board member to come through the ranks.

"I'd like to see at least one youngster being elected to all Section Committees by the end of the year. We need people to be nurtured the way Gordon did with me, serve a couple of years on the Section Committee then, if they are good enough, progressing to the Region and then the main Board. Although we do have a committee structure very similar to the ones we complain about in clubs I can't think of another way of working and I believe the structure of the Association is good. However, what you don't want is a regurgitation of the same old people," said Richard, who at 46 sees himself as the last of the old school of greenkeeper.



2005 Chairman Kerran Daly, right, hands over the BIGGA reins to Richard Whyman

"I'm probably more passionate about this than most because my son has just entered greenkeeping and we don't want the next generation to be held back, not being given a chance and not having their ideas about running the Association coming forward," said Richard, who said he will be taking a step back once his term is over, although always be available in the background to help when asked.

"The best thing that happened to me was giving up the Devon and Cornwall Secretary job for two years when I joined Burnham as I had got very blinkered. I've returned with a different outlook and see no major problems at all when, as Secretary, there seemed many. It was good for me to take a step back and I'd recommend that to others – give it up for a couple of years, let someone else have a go and then return."

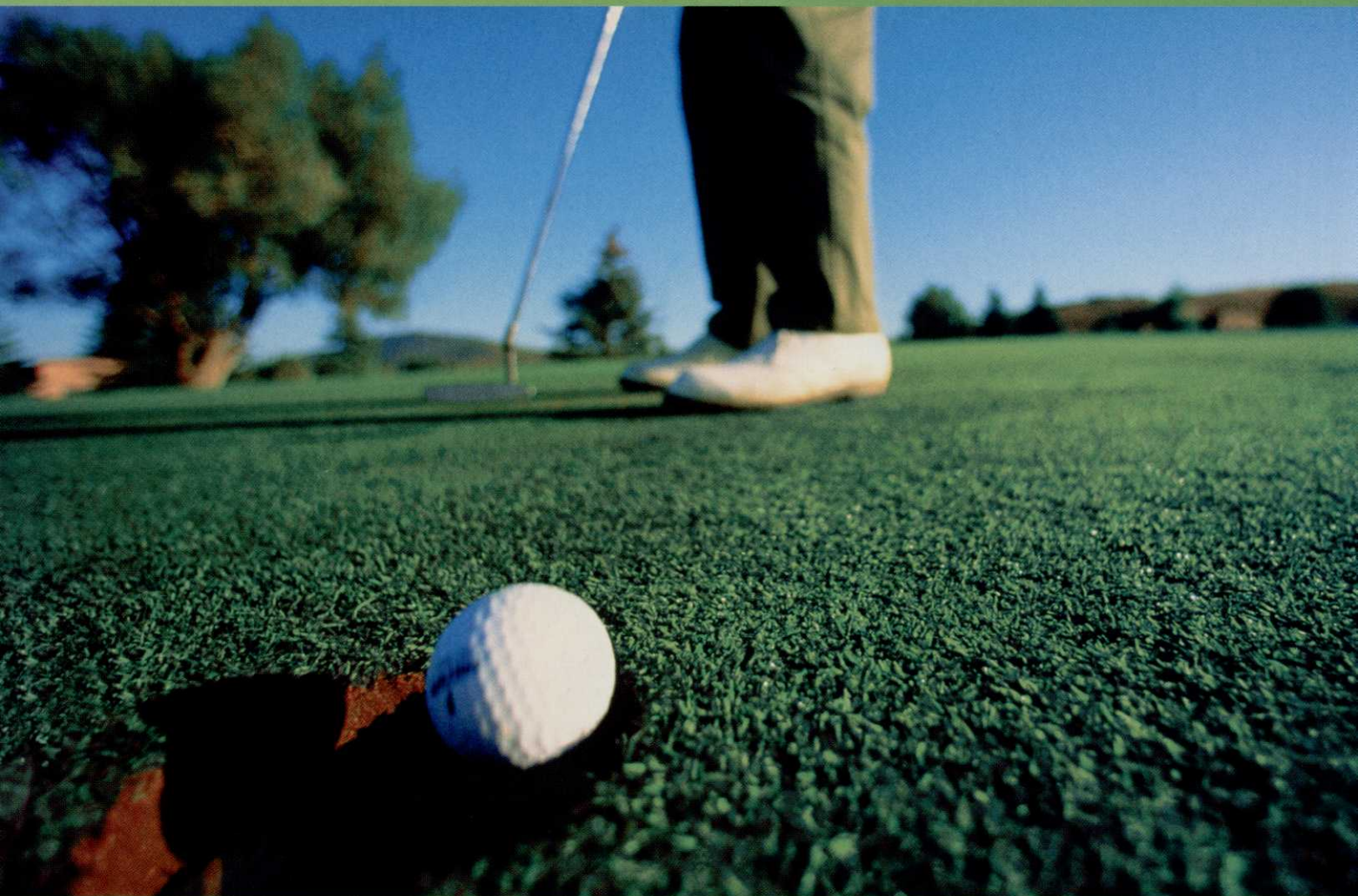
Richard is really looking forward to his Chairmanship and particularly the opportunity to attend the GCSAA Conference and Show, in Atlanta, and the Canadian Superintendents' Conference and Show when he will head to Vancouver where he first visited as a member of the very first Bernhard Scholarship trip.

One thing you can be sure about with Richard is that he will make the most of his year and enjoy it. He was, after all, made for the role of Chairman!



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# In the Shed

Greenkeeper International brings you 'In the Shed', a puzzle page to keep you entertained when the weather forces you in or for when times are slow.

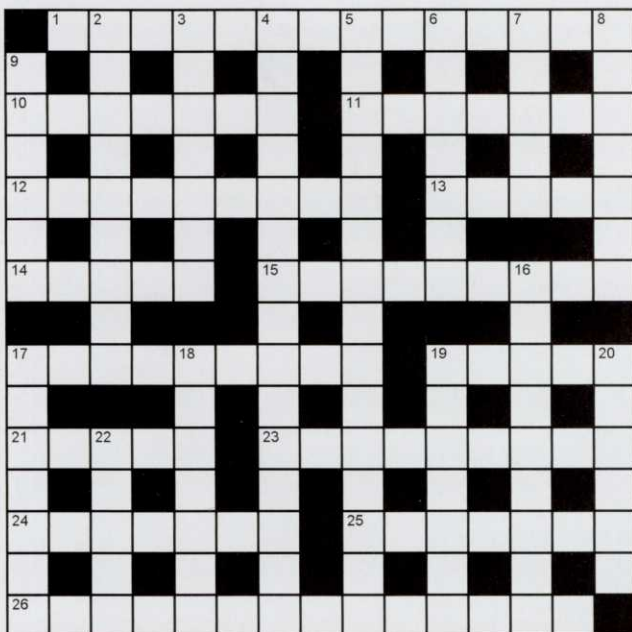
## CROSSWORD - Compiled by Anax

### ACROSS

- 1 Form of motorsport in which contact is permitted (5-3,6)
- 10 Establish as fact (7)
- 11 Peninsula extending into the Gulf of Mexico (7)
- 12 Inherited by descent (9)
- 13 Cause confusion, mislead (5)
- 14 Recognised (5)
- 15 In a lawless manner (9)
- 17 Stage name of British singer Joscelyn Eve Stoker (4,5)
- 19 Body of religious teachings (5)
- 21 Greek island, popular holiday destination (5)
- 23 Fulfilled (9)
- 24 African river, flows into the Mozambique Channel (7)
- 25 Of a style reminiscent of much earlier times (7)
- 26 All at once (2,3,4,5)

### DOWN

- 2 Persistent, single-minded (9)
- 3 Deep, vivid red colour (7)
- 4 Whatever happens (4,4,2,5)
- 5 Arts venue in South Kensington (5,6,4)
- 6 One who practices self-denial for religious purposes (7)
- 7 Entomb, bury (5)
- 8 Passage between seats (7)
- 9 Anti-aircraft artillery (3-3)
- 16 Gilbert & Sullivan operetta also called "The Town of Titipu" (3,6)
- 17 Whirlpool bathtub tradename (7)
- 18 Press together (7)
- 19 Usually reliable money-making project (4,3)
- 20 Take off, subtract (6)
- 22 John ---, central character of the 1982 film First Blood (5)



## ANAGRAM

Tony Blair is in his final stint as Prime Minister, the Tory's have a new man at the helm and the Liberal Democrats are now searching for a new leader. So can you work out these two famous politicians – one British, one foreign?

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## QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

1. In what year did Australia make their only previous appearance in football's World Cup finals?
2. In cricket, who is the new coach of Leicestershire?
3. Which Celtic League rugby union side play at Stradey Park?
4. Which 17 year old became the youngest player to score a Football League hat trick in April 1988?
5. Which jockey rode Hedgehunter to win the Grand National in 2005?
6. Which Coca-Cola Championship club play at Loftus Road?
7. European light-welterweight champion Junior Witter suffered his only defeat against which American?
8. Which venue will stage the 2006 Heineken Cup final?
9. Spanish club Real Sociedad hail from which northern city?

## SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

		3	1	8				
	2					1		
					9	6	3	
6		4		5				2
	3		9		6		8	
8				1		3		6
	4	8	7					
		7					5	
					4	1	2	

Supplied by [www.dailysudoku.com](http://www.dailysudoku.com)

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Look closely at the pictures below and try and spot the difference between them. You should be able to spot six!



ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES ARE SHOWN ON PAGE 55





# News from the Chief Executive

Welcome to our new Chairman, Richard Whyman, and his Vice Chairman, Billy McMillan and I look forward to working with them. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Andy Campbell MG, who leaves the Board as Immediate Past Chairman, for his relentless energy and enthusiasm and wish him every success in his new job with the Old Course Hotel in St. Andrews.

Thanks are also due to George Barr, who is replaced on the Board by Raymond Day as the representative for the South East Region. Kerran has been an inspiration to us all with his column and I am sure that he has thrown down a difficult challenge for Richard to beat!

With over 7,000 visitors representing 31 countries there is no doubting that Harrogate Week placed BIGGA well and truly on the international scene. The event is firmly placed in the diary of those involved in either turf management or the administration of golf and many of the delegates took advantage of the diverse package of education available. Despite the perception of Harrogate being buried somewhere in North Yorkshire it still proves to be a popular venue and provides a perfect focal point for the industry.

Thankfully gone are the days of Harrogate being seen as an excuse for a trip away from home or work when the chance to have a drink (or two) was foremost in some visitor's thoughts. Last week I was proud to be associated with an industry, whose representatives and members conducted themselves and their business in a very professional manner.

The success of the week very much depends upon the support of the members and their colleagues, members or not, and I hope that many have taken inspiration from Harrogate Week 2006 and will make a determined effort to attend the event in January 2007. It is a matter of fact that due to budgetary constraints certain major companies have chosen not to exhibit in 2007 however plans are already underway at HQ for an expansion of the education while the actual configuration of the exhibition halls will be decided after the booking deadline of February 28.

I have received unprecedented support for the future from both exhibitors and visitors and together we can make Harrogate Week 2007 an event to beat all others. It was particularly heartening to see the major organisations in the golf industry working together and I intend building on this for next year.

With the prospect of spring around the corner then I and the rest of the management team at HQ will be looking at Regional and Section fixtures with a view to making visits and meeting members. I hope to renew some old acquaintances as well as make new ones and hope that members take the opportunity to support their Section.

All too often members are quick to criticise their local committee but slow to get involved themselves. Please do not be afraid to come forward and offer a little bit of help, even if on a casual basis.

Finally, for the benefit of those of you who read my column last month I can confirm that I have rejoined a club, but I have yet to tell my wife. Maybe some flowers on Valentine's Day will soften the blow!

**John Pemberton**



## ANNUAL SCOTTISH REGION CONFERENCE

The 2006 BIGGA Scottish Region Conference will take place at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline on Tuesday March 7.

This year's speakers include Ian Tomlinson, Course Manager from Rungstead Golf Club in Denmark, Richard Windows, Agronomist with the STRI in Scotland, and Euan Grant, Course Manager, Old Course St. Andrews. Other speakers include Dr Colin Fleming, Research Scientist Queens' University Belfast, Ann Murray, of the European Turf Laboratory Stirling, and finally David Snowden, European Technical Director Floratine Products.

Cost of the ticket is £32, which includes Tea/Coffee on arrival, coffee/pastry at the mid morning break and buffet lunch.

Full details and booking forms have been posted to all members and further forms can be obtained by contacting Peter J. Boyd, Regional Administrator on Tel/ Fax: 0141 616 3440 and e-mail at [pj.boyd@btinternet.com](mailto:pj.boyd@btinternet.com).

## East

A club very much in the news this month is Berwick Golf Club, known to many of you as 'Goswick'. During October 2000 the club commenced a major reconstruction of the course, with all works carried out in house by the Course Manager, George Thompson, and his team. Assisted by three part time labourers during the months of October to March the works were finally completed in 2004. The end result, which is a credit to all involved, includes four new greens, seven new championship tees, three realigned fairways and numerous new bunkers.

All materials used were sourced from the course, creating drainage ponds and wetlands areas, which are a great draw for wildlife. The prize for all their hard work arrived just before Christmas, with the announcement that Goswick has been appointed as a regional qualifier for the British Open from 2008 - 2012.

The recipients of the Patrons Awards this year were Ryan McCulloch, of Berwick Golf Club (in the news yet again), and Stuart Crawford, of North Berwick West, who each received a free trip to Harrogate Week. Hopefully their respective Course Managers will now benefit from this trip now they have returned.

During December I had a discussion with Tom Murray, Course Manager at Ratho Park. Tom is heavily involved with the Scottish Environment Group (SGEG for short), who runs a Golf Bag holder scheme. This scheme involves a number of key people of whom Tom is one, keeping a library of books and ideas on environmental issues. Areas covered include information on pond construction, tree planting and creating wetland areas. This information is available for use by all greenkeepers currently in training or others looking to improve their course's environmental potential. For further information Tom can be contacted by email on [t.d.murray@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:t.d.murray@blueyonder.co.uk) or by telephone on 07709 960163 or a full list of Bag Holders in the east area can contact Elspeth Coutts at [Elspeth.coutts@sgeg.org.uk](mailto:Elspeth.coutts@sgeg.org.uk).

Finally, belated congratulations to Ian Kinlay, Head Greenkeeper at The Glen Golf Club, for being included in the BIGGA Delegation of 10, which is Atlanta bound in February to take in the GCSAA Golf Industry Show courtesy of Bernhard & Co. Hopefully on his return Ian can be persuaded to write a few lines on his trip for this column.

Until next month  
Mike Dooner

## North

New members to the North Section this month are Dane Macpherson, Trainee Greenkeeper, Spey Valley GC; Andrew Aitken, Greenkeeper, Spey Valley GC; Barry Campbell, Greenkeeper, Spey Valley GC. Spey Valley Golf Club is the new course in Aviemore, which is attached to the Macdonald Hotel Group. They are working under Bob Mackay, who is the Course Manager.

Robert Patterson

## West

Welcome to this month's report. I hope everyone has had an enjoyable Christmas and all the best for 2006. During November we held our annual night out at the Studio in Glasgow. There were approximately 45 in attendance, once again it was a



great night with plenty of entertainment, that was just from the members, and the comedian was good as well.

The only problem was that it was a Saturday night and a few of the boys weren't allowed out, so I think next year we will revert back to a Friday. If anyone would like to see a change of venue please get in touch, as we are always open to discussion.

I attended the Patrons' Award Dinner during December, at the Terraces Hotel in Stirling, which once again was a first class venue. The speaker on the day was John McElvie, who is a former colleague of Peter's in the constabulary. He gave us a first class turn. Many thanks John on behalf of the Association. Also thanks to Peter for arranging the dinner and for his hard work beforehand, and to the Terraces' staff for their attentiveness and making us very welcome.

I would like to congratulate the Patron Award winners from the West Section, who are John Barr, Ranfurly Castle, and Colin Scott, from Glasgow Golf Club. Many thanks for all you have done for your Section over the past year.

We have a new Committee member in the Section - John Barr, from Ranfurly Castle. John has agreed to come on and do a stint after many hours persuasion in the Wallace Bar Renfrew. I know John will do a great job and we look forward to seeing him at his first meeting in February.

Other Committee news - John Robertson, Hilton Park GC, stepped down at the last AGM. John was the Education Convenor for many years and did a first class job. On behalf of the Committee and myself I would like to thank you very much for your efforts and all the best for the future.

The fixture list for 2006 will be sent out over the next month informing all members of events planned, also seminars and golf outings for the year ahead. Once again Richard Aitkin has kindly sponsored the fixture card.

On a sad note, I announce the passing of Joe McKean, a long time member of the Section, who was also a past Secretary of SIGGA. Joe was a member at Hags Castle Golf Club and will be sadly missed. Our thoughts go to his family and friends at this sad time.

During spring/early summer we hope to arrange an open day with the Fairways Group. Times and venue will be printed as soon as possible. With a wide range of their products on show, including Textron, Iseki, etc.

The Scottish Conference will once again be held at Larder College, Dunfermline, on March 7. There will be a wide range of speakers on the day, so if you haven't yet booked then do so now.

A happy New Year to all the Drimsynie die hards. We held our autumn outing during October. The winner on the day was Robert Bruce with Davy, the local chef, finishing second. It was a fantastic day, apart from the heavy rain at the end. I would like to thank Bryce Houston, the President of the die hards, for arranging the day's festivities. We look forward to returning in March for our spring outing. Hopefully we will be back to full numbers.

Any news, etc. please get in touch on 07970 366 355.

Fraser Ross

## NORTHERN REGION

### North West

I hope you all enjoyed Harrogate Week and took in a few of the seminars. I thought the education side of the Week was superb, so congratulations and well done to everyone involved in making Harrogate the only place to be.

Fixture lists are going to be sent out to everyone in the North West Section this year. Here is a little taster of what is to come in 2006.

North Wales Section Seminar, Carden Park, February 21; Spring Tournament, West Lancashire GC, April 20; Summer Tournament, Morecambe GC, June 15; The Autumn Tournament will be at St Annes Old Golf Club, date TBA.

As always, to play in the spring, summer or autumn tournaments you must send a cheque for £20, payable to BIGGA North West Section. The address to send your cheque to is Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU.

Please don't leave it until the last minute to book your place, as the golf club caterers need to be informed in plenty of time and Billy gives everyone a hard time. If anyone has any news or just needs a little bit of advice, please contact the

Secretary, Bert Cross, on 0151 7245412 or myself on 0151 2894625. If you are on the World Wide Web my email address is [jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk).

Chris Sheehan

### Northern

Apologies to my regular readers who will have noticed that my column was missing last month. I admit that I missed the last post, so to speak. However, albeit rather belatedly, I have a number of pieces of news for you now.

On October 5 we were privileged guests of Woolley Park Golf Club for our Autumn Tournament and AGM. Sadly it was again a poor turnout. The results on the day were as follows.

Division 1. 1. Andy Slingsby; 2. Dave Collins; 3. Rob Gee. Division 2. 1. Stuart Mason; 2. Keith Grey; 3. Adam Speight. Division 3. 1. Jo Baxter; 2. David Heaton; 3. Andy Scaman. Trade. 1. Ian Collett; 2. Gary Potter.

Our thanks to Phil Rowbotham and his staff for producing a fantastic golf course, and to all the clubhouse staff for a superb meal.

December 10 was the date for Christmas Golf and 'Night Out!' Luckily, this year I'm not aware of anybody being arrested. Although I have heard that a member of the Crow Nest staff felt, shall we say, "a little unwell" in a Halifax drinking establishment and was sent home in disgrace.

I won't say whom it was, but suffice to say it wasn't Rob or Damian! I'll bring you the results next month, when hopefully I'll have located the scores, but if I remember correctly it was Team Mike Brear who walked away with the champagne. Again, a big thank you to Martin Heggy, Jo, Paul and everybody else at Bradford Moor Golf Club for what everyone agrees was a great day.

Adam Speight

### Cleveland

Well Harrogate Week has come and gone and I hope things have gone as well as usual. I'm sure a lot of BIGGA members supported the BTME Exhibition. Things are very quiet and there is little to report. I'm led to believe that the mild, moist weather has resulted in a lot of fungal attacks recently. Bad news for the greenkeeping fraternity, but great for the chemical salesmen! It's an ill wind, eh boys!

I heard a nice little story the other day about three men in the pub for a little drink. One was from Glasgow, one from Dublin and the third from the Boro. They spot Jesus sitting at the bar and get the waiter to give him three drinks. The Jock sends a double whisky, the Mick sends a Guinness and the Smoggie supplies a pint of lager. After he'd finished the drinks Jesus walks over to the trio to thank them.

Firstly he shakes the Dublin boy's hand and the Irishman shouts "A miracle, a miracle my arthritis has been cured!" Jesus then shakes the Glaswegian's hand and the Jock exclaims "A miracle, a miracle my bad back has been cured!" As Jesus approaches the Boro boy, the Smoggie pulls away and shouts "Beggar off Jesus, I'm on disability!"

Not much good news on the football scene with the three Premier teams and the Pools doing badly. Darlo have put a good run together - hope they can keep it up.

Don't forget - Barry Walker's quiz at Teesside Golf Club is Wednesday February 8, commencing at 7.30pm. Any news to me on 07831 214879.

Terry Charlton

### Sheffield

On December 12 we held our Christmas Competition, sponsored by Rigby Taylor, at Rotherham Golf Club. On behalf of the Section I would like to thank the club for giving the courtesy of their course once again. Thanks also go to the bar and catering staff for providing an enjoyable meal and excellent service.

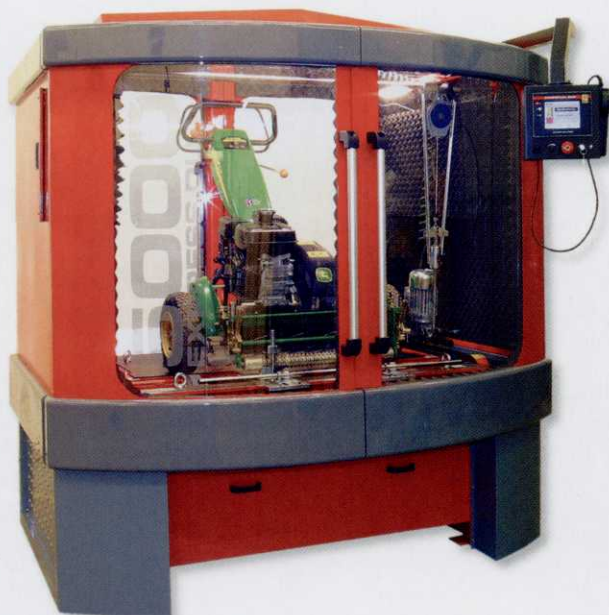
On the golf side of things it was a lovely golfing day for December, sometimes a bit to sunny when playing holes into the sun! Rotherham was in great condition. Well done to Dave Chappell and his staff for doing an excellent job. Thanks go to Mike Brear, from Rigby Taylor, for sponsoring the event once again and to all other trade members who provided prizes. This year everybody who played got a prize to go home with! There was some excellent golf played and the eventual winner, with 27pts from 12 holes, was Joel France. Well played Joel!

Results: 1. J. France, 27pts; 2. D. Chappell, 26pts; 3. R. Jones, 25pts; 4. G. Brittan, 25pts; 5. S. Currie, 25pts. Well played everyone! Guest winner was Mike Brear. Well played Mike!

After the golf we held our AGM and with a good attendance it ran fairly smoothly. There was one change to our Committee with Colin Hoppe standing



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down. Thanks for all the work you did Colin. Kevin Kelsall was elected on to take his place. Gordon Brammah is trying to get a library running in the Section, but we want to know if anyone out there needs any books for study or reference. If so, the Section may be able to buy them and then add them to the library! If this is so, please feel free to contact Gordon on 07814 043220 or 0114 2308469 to discuss things further.

Last piece of news this month, and it is quite a big piece. On March 23 we have arranged a lecture to be given by Peter Alliss. After a lot of hard work Gordon has persuaded him to give us a talk, which will be held at Rotherham Golf Club once again. You should be receiving or have received details of this event in the post, this will be a very popular day.

Any news please contact me as usual on 07793111845 or [jv.lax@tesco.net](mailto:jv.lax@tesco.net)  
John Lax

## MIDLAND REGION

### East Midlands

Last year's Christmas Tournament was graced with one of football's all time greats, Gary McAllister. He is a golf club colleague of myself and has a CV that reads as follows: Motherwell FC 1980; Leicester City 1985; Leeds 1990 (league champions in 91 & 92); Coventry 1996; Liverpool 2000 and a winner of five trophies that include a League Cup, FA Cup, UEFA and UEFA Super Cup and a Charity Shield; plus a short spell as Player Manager at Coventry. Gary gave a thrilling hour long Question and Answer session at Charnwood Forest Golf Club after the Christmas Tournament.

Gary answered questions of all types ranging from missed penalties to life as a manager as well as plenty of footballing stories. Gary very generously gave his time for free but asked that we make a donation of £250 to our local Rainbows Hospice, which cares for terminally ill children.

In recognition for what he did we also made him a Trade and Associate member of the Association and hope to see him at some future events. We also asked him to wear the BIGGA tie when he is working on the TV for Sky - so watch very carefully!

We trust he had a good day because he also won the Trade and Associate prize with a magnificent 34 points on a cold and very windy day beating Simon Hedley on 30 points and David Smith with 27.

Other results in the 0-14 category were Andy Marsh, 39; Nigel Colley, 34; and Keith Smith, with 32. In the 15-28 category Craig Watt won with a fantastic 46 points from Frazer Harrison, 35, and Ross McCarthy, 31pts.

Thanks to everybody, particularly Head Greenkeeper, Tim Allard, who made the day so successful and to Rigby Taylor for their sponsorship.

Richard Barker

### Midland

Our Christmas event was held at the wonderful Links Formby GC on December 2. Our thanks to the club for affording us such a sumptuous venue at so prestigious a course. The course was presented to a standard which can only be aspired to. Such being achieved by Derek Pothsthaite and his obviously excellent greenkeeping team. Our greatest of thanks to you all.

The results of the day were: 1. D. Fellows & D. Clewes; 2. A. Cornes & R. Thomas; 3. M. Gash & R. Thwaites; 4. J. Ganley & P. McCrainor. Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin went to L. Swann & M. Hughes respectively. Thanks to M. Chamberlain, Tacit, for the once again excellent prize table.

As you may or may not know I have never really been a football fan (I can hear it now - "ponce"). So imagine my surprise when I received a phone call from Steve Bruce asking why their number one fan's wife was accompanying their sons (Nick, Andy and Richard) to home matches. He did say that Karen was perhaps a little more pleasing to the eye. Seriously though, V. Lee, Course Manager, Great Barr, has been through the mill health wise this year. Just to let you know that we are all thinking of you Vince and wishing you a speedy recovery so as you can enjoy your 40th on the 16. Happy Birthday mate.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome five new members to our Section. S. J. Harvey, A. Myau, J.D. Shaw, C. Woodall and I.S. Beech. I hope that you shall take