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THE GREENKEEPING KID

By The Kid

There was this kid who left school. Used to bum around on the back of his mates motorbike, getting merry on six pints and wondering what was out beyond the twinkling stars.

His mate was a greenkeeper. Kid wondered what the hell that was and why anyone would want to be one. Cutting grass all day was not what was out beyond the twinkling stars. One day his mate said 'Hey Kid, I'm fed up buying all the beer, do you fancy helping out at the golf club for a few weeks so you can pay your round?' Kid said 'Well that'll be a laugh, what do I have to do?'

After a month Kid thought, 'Hell this is hard work but there is something about it though, there is something about it.'

Kid had always been a rebel. Well, he had always been a teenager, which qualified him, but he went extra. When he was merry he sang union songs and dreamed he was Che Guevara. Working at the golf club wasn't quite it, but there was something about it though. Kid immediately joined the 'Association', the BGGGA. It wasn't a union but hell, Kid could see himself marching down Whitehall with his BGGGA banner singing 'We Shall Overcome' and shouting 'Fair pay for greenkeepers, balls to golfers!!' Kid drank quite a bit.

Within a year Kid had got the woman thing. In his actions he wasn't Kid any more but he still liked to think he was. He followed her down south and went to work for a council run golf course. Kid paid his union dues every week and could sing his songs with more feeling. 'Us council workers are gonna sort that government out!' Yeah Kid, yeah!

Kid helped to form a local section of the BGGGA and rose to be chairman. He was pushing for revolution but found that most of the time they would rather debate whether they should play a greensome or a Texas Scramble and 'Was an umbrella a good 1st prize?' Kid wasn't into golf.

Some time on Kid heard about some other rebels who weren't happy with the Association and wanted to form a new Association to progress the lot of greenkeepers through education. Now, education was something Kid was keen on. He had heard his dad talk about education and his dad was smart. He had his six pints and decided that he didn't really like school but he liked education. He would join. Look out EIGGA cause Kid's a-rollin' in!

'Christ these guys are good', thought Kid as he sat in the dining Hall of King's College, Cambridge, banging slowly and rhythmically on the big wooden table to show his appreciation as the guest speakers marched in for supper. Kid was right in the heart of establishment, right under its vaulted roof. 'These guys are really good and they're not even real rebels' thought Kid. Along with the many others gathered in academia, he knew something was happening. He was not sure what, but something was happening. It was kinda like that feeling Kid got when he was out in the early morning by himself at that special place on the golf course. Even the six pints couldn't match that. Kid only had four, went to bed and slept like a big fat ginger Tom on a Cornish windowsill.

Well time passed and Kid learned all he could. EIGGA joined in with the Scottish guys, 'real rebels the Scottish guys' thought Kid, to form the BIGGA.

Things took off. The BIGGA got involved in all sorts of education and were sitting down with the employers and the governing bodies to improve basic working conditions by empowerment through education. Kid began to realise that railing against things was not always the best way of getting them changed. Shouting from the sidelines was not as productive as getting on the pitch and working your socks off. It was not half as rewarding either. Kid was down to two pints now but still singing his songs.

Kid knew from his own experience that the more educated and professional he got the more respect he and his workmates commanded and the better they were treated. He wanted everyone to get that message and set about spreading it. He was working hard on the left wing to supply the crosses for his team when one day the manager pulled him to one side and said 'Hey, Kid, you're not a kid anymore, how about being Captain and leading the team.'

'Christ sakes!' thought Kid, but he was owing. He was owing all the beer from the motorbike rides, he was owing all the revolutionaries, he was owing all the midfielders who were running harder than he was. He didn't really want to do all the meeting and greeting, all the shaking hands and dishing out prizes, all the 'saying the right thing', but he was owing big time. Kid went establishment.

He went from patrolling the left wing to roaming free in the central role. He was now seeing close up what the right back was doing and where he was coming from. All the members of the team had different attributes and he saw them in a different light. They had different backgrounds, different philosophies, different perspectives. Some didn't have any pints at all or ever even wonder what was out beyond the twinkling stars. But they all had one thing in common, they all wanted to do their best for the team and they all wanted to support each other, in whatever way they could. From a distance Kid had always thought that the right back was a bit of a plodder but close up Kid could see the sweat and hear the clattering studs. He put his head in where it hurt for the team. Kid admired him a lot.

'It takes some time to realise that you are not always right', thought Kid and Kid now knew that he was not always right. He had his story and everyone else had theirs. It is not really about who has the best story, it's more about listening to all the stories and then doing what is best for the team. It's about respecting others viewpoints. It's about staying together and talking things through. It's about inclusiveness, not isolation. It's about compromise, not conflict. It's about unity, not independence. In short, it is about association. Oh, and of course, it is about wondering what is out beyond the twinkling stars.

'Best regards to everyone who has helped me along the way.'

Kid



News from the Chief Executive

It is Sunday morning and the sun streams through the window of the waiting lounge in Brussels airport where I eagerly await the 'plane to take me home, a much nicer day than the one that greeted me on Thursday.

For the past three days I have been networking with our European colleagues who have all come together to represent their countries at the annual FEGGA Conference. Just like at Harrogate there is a great camaraderie between delegates, despite cultural and language differences, and it's not long in any gathering before the talk turns to greenkeeping and golf club life. The conference delegates were presented with an excellent education programme including talks from Golf Environment Europe, the R&A, Frank Newberry and the key sponsors.

The main theme revolved around environmental issues and of particular personal interest was a presentation on the workings of the European Parliament that explained very clearly the process through which legislation is created and the recent draft paper on pesticides was used as an illustration. There is little doubt in my mind that tighter legislation is just around the corner and while I do not envisage a ban on chemicals I do think that eventually there will be much stricter control over the purchase and use of such products, including the domestic consumer. Upon closer inspection however it is clear that the UK leads the way in control and use of such products however we cannot afford to relax the pressure on Brussels through participation in such groups as the Amenity Forum.

With the sun in mind I am conscious of a recent meeting with representatives of the Karen Clifford Skin Cancer Charity that has been established to raise the awareness of the risks of over exposure to UV leading to skin cancer. It seems that the incidence of this illness is on the increase and it is only a question of time before the courts try test cases against employers who have a duty of care under health and safety legislation. If you wish to learn more then visit www.skcin.org and more on this will be featured in coming issues of Greenkeeper International and the BIGGA website.

At BIGGA HOUSE we seem to be getting more calls or e-mails than usual from golfers regarding the policy of course closure due to adverse conditions. We treat these with extreme care and usually suggest that the enquirer communicates better with the greenkeeping staff at his or her club. Any members needing help should not hesitate to contact a member of staff here at Aldwark and please remember that the Legal Helpline facility covers Health and Safety advice as well as a myriad of other legislation. I can confirm that the service is completely free and members should contact their Regional Administer if they feel that a face-to-face friendly chat with someone would help.

There is no need to feel isolated when help could be provided, usually all for the cost of a 'phone call. After all that's part of why people join associations such as ours.

John Pemberton



SCOTTISH REGION – AYRSHIRE

Hello to you all, hope you're in good health and have managed to get some winter renovation and maintenance work done in between the horrendously wet and windy weather we've been bearing the brunt of!

The date for the Spring Outing to be played over the Portland Course at Troon has been confirmed and will be Tuesday April 15. Derek will be sending out the invites so be sure to get them in promptly as I'm sure places will be in high demand. Remember the outing also serves as the first leg of the Daval-sponsored Harry Diamond Memorial Jug.

I was fortunate enough to get down to Harrogate for a few days and thoroughly enjoyed it! No, not just to get a break from a mundane home life or to escape the horrendously wet and... (you get the picture), well ok maybe a wee bit of that! but mainly because it was great to see old friends and hopefully made new ones. It gives you the opportunity to find out the hot topics in the profession and to take in seminars that are of interest to you.

I had a beer or two with Kerr Rowan and Ian Smith, a couple of local lads selected for the Bernhard-sponsored trip to the GCSAA show in Orlando, so I'm sure they will of had a good time of it over there.

In closing I would just like to wish my pal and ex Turnberry workmate Brian Aitken all the best as he embarks on a new challenge with his lawn care business.

Denis Twedell

07939 104701 denis.t@hotmail.co.uk



CENTRAL

Harrogate week seems like a long time ago now but it was a good week by all accounts. I was unfortunately unable to attend this year but those I spoke to certainly got a lot from it. The Section pass on our (belated) congratulations to Walter Woods on receiving his Lifetime Achievement Award, which was very much deserved. I often bump into Walter when he is out practising on the courses at St Andrews and he never mentioned it, which is typical of his self-deprecating style.

The season will soon be upon us and hopefully the weather will have improved from the time I'm writing this. The Section are still hoping to arrange a visit to the Barenbrug mixing plant at Falkirk followed by a presentation before the end of March. Details of the date and directions to the Warehouse will be posted on the website, www.biggacentralsection.org.uk as soon as they become available so keep a look out for that.

Also, your committee will be considering whether to stage a social function some evening as has been suggested on the website, clay pigeon shooting, go karting or similar. Again, log onto the website and go to the new forum page to give us your suggestions on that or any other items that interest you. The forum on the website has been very

Around the Green

well received and there is now a chat room section which has started up every Sunday evening at 8pm. Member you have to register in the first instance when you log in to allow to access to the form.

Hopefully we will see you at the Spring Outing at Lundin Links on April 24, if not before. We only have 20 times available to us from 11.32 until 2.04 so a speedy return of your entry forms once you get them is recommended. Lundin Links is a great course and Billy Swann and his team have consistently done a really good job there over the years.

Congratulations to Craig Wilson, the man mountain who works at St Andrews Links, who has been selected for the Scottish under 20 Rugby squad and to the Leven Links team who trounced their "Royal" Scoonie opponents at their annual games night.

Finally, we all wish a speedy recovery to Andy O Hara, Jim Finlayson and George McDonald who have all been seriously ill recently.

Gordon Moir



EAST

Our apologies. Due to a mix up at BIGGA HQ, last month's East Section notes were not printed. They have been added to this month's text.

I start this month's report on a sad note with the news that Shaun Hardy, Head Greenkeeper at Magdalene Fields in Berwick was killed on Thursday, 17th January 2008. Two suspects are currently being held in police custody on manslaughter charges. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this time.

The dates for 2008 are as follows: Spring Outing – 1st April, Gullane No.2 at 1pm; Autumn outing – 9th September, Kingsknowe at 1pm; Willie Woods Tournament – 9th October, West Linton at 1pm; AGM – 30th October, Dundas Park.

The Willie Woods Tournament this year is being sponsored by Scotts, therefore a big thank you in advance is due to them and to our sponsor in previous years, Golf Finance, who are based in North Berwick.

The Section is currently organising an educational trip to the Renaissance Club, in East Lothian. The date and time will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Finally the long overdue questionnaire based on ways to improve the Section is due out shortly. Please do not file it in the bin, complete and return it in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

The Scottish winner of the BIGGA 2007 Environment Award is West Linton Golf Club. The club, that previously received a Highly Commended award from this competition, was delighted to receive the award for Scotland. Good environmental practices are well established on the course and in the clubhouse, and the club intends to develop and promote the key features of its stunning location. Working with local schools, organisations and agencies the club is keen to show off its environmental strengths and their importance to the game of golf in West Linton.

The Head Greenkeeper at Swanston Golf Club, John Gallagher, has recently had a partial Hip Replacement. On behalf of the committee, I would like to wish John a speedy return to full fitness.

On the trade front Robert T Bruce retired at the end of 2007. Although in the main he lived and worked in the West of Scotland, he was well known throughout Scotland and the North of England. I for one will miss his smile and tremendous wit!

On a personal note, Roz and I spent New Year in Crete. The good weather and the absence of tourists made the hassle of three flights out and three flights back worth the effort!

Until next month

Mike Dooner



NORTH

How is everybody this month? Hopefully March will bring some decent weather for us to get the courses up and running.

The two outings this year will be at Craibstone in the Spring and Kirriemuir in the Autumn. The Spring outing is slightly earlier this year on April 24. Hopefully this will allow more of our members to come along and support the section before they get too busy on their respective golf courses. The 200 Club will be coming out soon and this is our best means of income so let's support it and buy as many tickets as possible. Bob Hardie is the man to see for tickets if you don't already have one or you know of somebody that is looking for one. Bob's number is 07841-993772 for information regarding the 200 club.

Congratulations are due to Neil Bruce, at Montrose GC, on his appointment as Course Manager. There was a strong entry for this job so well done to Neil in coming out on top, I'm sure he will relish the chance to put his own stamp on the course over the next few years.

William Mackenzie, who was First Assistant at Fortrose GC, has left to take up the post of Head Greenkeeper at Ulapool GC. Good luck to him in his new post. Graham Gordon, who is the Deputy Head at Oldmeldrum GC, has become a father for the 1st time with a baby daughter arriving in late January. Rebecca is doing well and keeping her father awake till the early hours. Enjoy fatherhood Graham, grey hairs will follow soon.

Not much more from me this month so here's hoping for a good spring weather wise to kick-start some growth.

Robert Patterson Royal Aberdeen GC



NORTHERN – NORTH EAST

Will they or won't they, the Messiahs have returned (yes it's plural) firstly King Kev has returned to Newcastle Utd, and secondly Steve Cram, formerly of Slaley Hall, has returned back to Slaley, after being in charge of Close House for the past couple of years, just in time for an

Around the Green

important professional Seniors' Competition coming up in August this year. Good luck, Steve, hope to meet you sometime this year.

With Steve moving, Brian Clark who was his second in command at Close House has been promoted to Course Manager and is looking forward to having his own course to look after.

News from a couple of courses in our Section, Longhirst Hall have got the Junior County Championship and the local newspaper the Evening Chronicle Sunshine Fund Golf Day this year. Not bad going for the time the course has been going - this represents a major step forward for them for the hard work done over the years to host such events. Those of you who know Graham Chambers know he is now officially Golf Manager, looking after the business as a whole, including the courses, overseeing the clubhouse operation and most of the Club Secretary duties. Fortunately he has Stu Wilson and Stephen Smith doing a great job of overseeing the daily tasks on the courses - this is all part of the growth process which is ongoing as always.

Talking to Head Greenkeeper Tommy Harrison from Gosforth GC (Bridal Path) the other day and he was saying that this season they spending quite a bit of money on new machinery, buying a rough cutter, fairway and tees cutter, but what's different is that he's not buying all the same make - now that doesn't happen very often these days.

Section Competitions have been confirmed. This year we are going to Dunstanborough Castle in the Spring (Wednesday, April 16) we are trying different days this year maybe we will get more people playing as figures have dropped severely. The Autumn Competition is at Burgham Park, this is the first time we have played there and that's on October 8.

If you play at Dunstanborough Castle in April perhaps you could take time out for looking at the reconstruction of greenkeepers shed from the 1900s, in the same style and dimensions as the original but with extended eaves to provide nesting space for birds. If you read your December magazine you would see that they received the 2007 innovation title for restoration work been done on various parts of their course.

And finally, once again we have Terry Charlton to thank for providing transport - much appreciated from the North East Section. A little mention should not go unnoticed about Steve Pope, I think broke his own record by collecting about 26 pens and most likely some woolly hats as well - the Section committee will set you a target for next year Steve.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTHERN

A date has finally been set for the Spring Seminar. It will be taking place on Thursday, 13 March at the De Vere Oulton Hall Hotel and Golf Complex, Leeds. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of both Bernhard and Company and Rigby Taylor, this is a free seminar, open to all members of BIGGA Northern Section, and we have three of the best speakers around - Martyn Jones, Stephen Bernhard and the Northern Section's own Jim Brown.

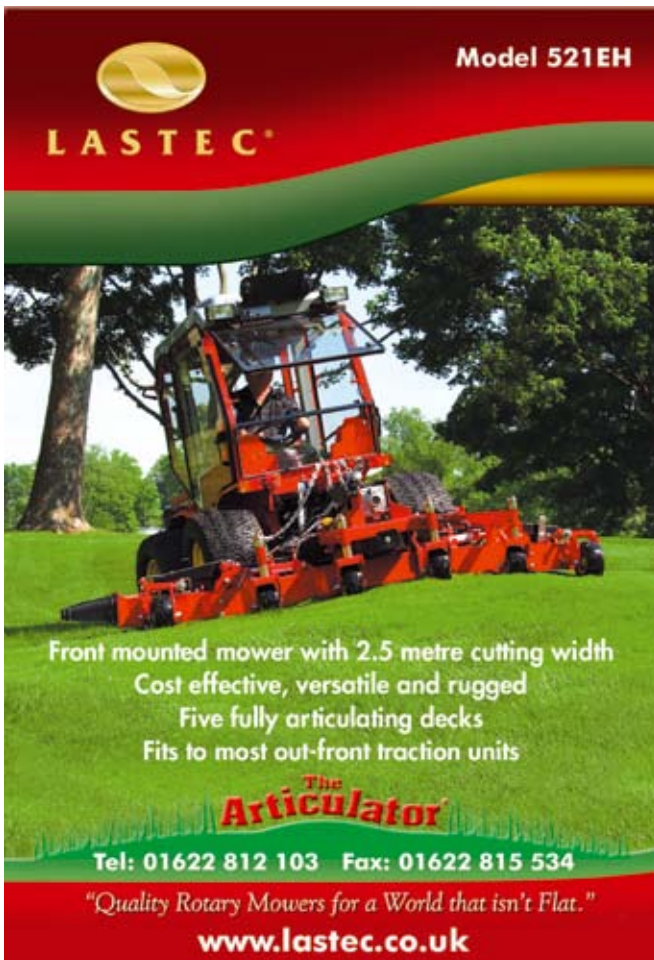
The day will start at around 9.15am with bacon rolls and coffee, followed by Martyn Jones' talk, entitled "Sustainable Golf Or Not?" Stephen Bernhard will take over at 11am for his talk "Stay Sharp, Run Fast". A free buffet lunch will follow, before Oulton Hall's Golf and Estates Manager Jim Brown speaks on "The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Oulton Hall".

This seminar is strictly limited to 50 places, so please book early to avoid disappointment. Anyone wishing to attend please get in touch with me on 07739 319060 as soon as possible.

Another important date for your diaries is Wednesday, 30 April, which is the confirmed date for the Spring Tournament, to be held at Filey Golf Club. First tee off is at 12.15, and bacon rolls and coffee will be available from around 11.30. For future events all names AND payment must be received at least seven days prior to the event. If payment is not received prior to the day then unfortunately places will be cancelled. If you have any difficulties with this please get in touch and we can come to an agreement.

Next month I will bring you the dates of the remainder of 2008s golf events.

Adam Speight 07739 319060



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CLEVELAND

Sorry about the lack of notes recently but there was a mix up between HQ and myself on two separate occasions.

Well, another successful Harrogate Week has come and gone and I feel I should congratulate all the organisers and thank all of the trade supporters too. Although the merger talks between BIGGA and the IOG have been halted for the moment, the 'big shows' are one area where the 'Industry' can support each other. Can I urge all greenkeepers and groundsman to work together even if the circumstances are less formal than we hoped for?

Our Section members are invited to enter the 2008 Annual Turfcare Darts Championships. The Southern qualifier has been provisional booked for Castle Eden Cricket Club at 7pm on Thursday, March 20. The first prize is £100 with the runner up receiving £50 and semi finalists £25 each. Please ring Karen on 01207 505837 for further details and booking your place in the draw.

Our Spring Outing is planned for Tuesday, April 15 at Blackwell Grange Golf Club, Darlington. Tee off times are 9.30 – 10.30am. Please book with Pembo as numbers are limited 07989 508878. It will be nice to play Blackwell again after a good few years!

We were represented by several members of the branch at the Turfcare quiz at Mount Oswald in December.

The greenkeepers team was triumphant this year and Barry Walker received the trophy on behalf of the Greenkeepers. Well done, lads and lasses.

Finally the first 'Bring a Bottle' tournament was held at Cleveland Golf Club on a beautiful day in December. This team Stableford event was won by a quartet of Ian Pemberton (Cleveland GC), Dave Hatfield (Cleveland GC Greens Chairman), Phil Hargrave (South Shields GC) and Anthony 'Titch' McGeough (Richmond GC). Their total of 118 points was enough to win easily.

I think local knowledge may have played some part in their victory. The longest drive was won by Martin McCririck of South Shields and Pembo was the 'Nearest the Pin' winner. May I compliment Ian and his staff for the condition of the course – the greens were superb! Thanks must also go to Cleveland Golf Club for the courtesy of the course and the superb meal.

The event was sponsored by Tacit and it was great to see their area manager Peter Marshall walking the course with the lads. Fortunately the Section Chairman, Tony Smith, did not attend, so no one had their ears bent over a full 18-hole walk. However he sent an able deputy in George Malcolm who spent the whole round telling his team how good looking he still is, even though in reality he's really an ugly old git! Just joking boys!

Terry 'El Prez' Charlton 07831 214879



SHEFFIELD

Once again not a lot of news this month, just to let everyone know that our new Section Secretary is James Stevens and anyone wishing to contact him at anytime with regard to any matter may feel free to do so on: 077388719614 or: jimmy_jams20@hotmail.com

We have got a lecture planned for March 12 at Rotherham Golf Club which will be sponsored by Rigby Taylor and the lecture will be given by Bernhards and Martyn Jones details of this you should of received in the post if you have not please feel free to contact James or myself.

As regards to the trip to Wembley we hope to try to re-arrange it at some later date we will keep you informed of this as we finalise the details. Anyone with any news please feel free to contact me on 07793111845 or on my new email: jvl1967@sky.com

John Lax



NORTH WALES

Here we go, March already and as the old adage goes, in like a lion out like a lamb (well we can only hope!).

It's around this time our minds turn to spring renovation and all the humbug it brings, will the aerators work properly? Will the top dresser spread properly? Will the dressing suppliers not put their prices up two hours before you put your order in? And finally will the weather actually be nice and allow you to get the dressing in before it rains! Fingers crossed eh!

The spring seminar will be held at Abergele golf club (LL22 8DS) postcode in case you're using sat nav to find your way there.

The main subject is the new downloadable Safety Management System, a holistic approach to health and safety not only covering the course but the clubhouse areas as well.

The agenda is SMS download and use, an SMS in use and the importance of it in the health and safety environment. This information will be very handy to have in today's blame and claim culture.

The Spring Competition will be held at Llanymynech Golf Club (SY10 8LB) on May 14 entry forms for all of this years competitions should be with you now. Any enquiries to Jeremy Hughes or Carl Crocher, who I'm sure will have all the answers for you.

We're a bit short on local news this month but anyone who was at Harrogate, would have seen a very proud father and son team, these being Brian and Darren Anderson as Darren was officially presented with his Master Greenkeeper plaque. We would like to increase the local news aspect of our column, so please get in touch with your local news, anything that you might want to share with the Section - Marriages, Births, promotions, Retirements. This might be your only



Around the Green

chance to see your name or your club's name in print in a national publication.

Peter Maybury petemayb66@aol.com
Johnny Evans Johnny.evans@tesco.net



MIDLAND REGION

Training and Education

There was something for everyone at Harrogate this year with a comprehensive programme of education. Congratulations to all at BIGGA and especially Sami and Rachael. I was one of the many candidates for the STRI presentation of The Disturbance Theory. The seminar was not only interesting and entertaining but delivered some food for thought. There is the possibility of hosting this seminar in the Midlands if there is sufficient interest. As ever you can contact me to discuss your training and education requirements and it would be nice to find some new venues for the autumn so please let me know if your club would be willing to host an event. We have lots of ideas for future events and topics with an Irrigation Electricians Workshop and Pesticide Update and Refresher Training amongst the first to be staged.

Please note that the date for the Midland Section Spring Tournament has been changed to Thursday, 24 April.

Paul Woodham



MIDLAND

Well, as we are all too aware, and for some to their embarrassment, security against theft in and around the sheds is now of huge importance. What with motion sensors, laser beams, circuit breakers, mess rooms which resemble a jail, and the call at one in the morning from the alarm company only to find that a spider has tripped the alarm. However the Wrekin greenkeepers have an additional security system called Rebel, the Dobermann Pinscher, whose father is Karl Lans. Does anyone else have an unusual security system?

Now our Spring Tournament is to be held at Kidderminster GC; however the Club has double booked the published (21/04/08) date as on the fixture card and entry form. The new date is Thursday, 24 April. Don't forget you can download an entry form from our web site, just click on the Golf link. You can still use the posted entry form, but please could you please put a line through the date and put the 24/04/08 so as Gary knows that you have entered the correct day. For this year's first three Tournaments the cost of entry has been reduced down to £20 each, it is hoped that such shall encourage more of you to attend these great days.

Don't forget to get your Scotts Doubles entry in before the Spring Tournament, as the draw shall be carried out there. Now if you are thinking that the same old faces always win why enter? The dynamic duo that is Paul and Ed have been cut two shots each in this event for this year, so come on support this long running great event.

Now I must admit that our website is growing from strength to strength in both its content and presentation. Leigh has posted some very interesting STRI articles in the News & Reports link, check them out they are worth reading. Our thanks to the many sponsors of the website which of course can be found on such.

Finally, our thanks to North Staffs Irrigation for this month's calendar page. If we have a summer like last year we shall all need a reliable system for sure, they can be found at www.northstaffsirrigration.co.uk

Sean McDade



EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello again. Hopefully everyone returned home from Harrogate Week in one piece and the hangovers have now diminished. A good complement of East of England Section members were present for some part of the show and a full committee was able to meet on the Wednesday (some more in body than in mind!). It was also good to catch up with old friends again.

The show seemed like a big success and congratulations should go to all involved with work in producing the stands and the education programme for the week. I certainly learned a few things so my green committee had better watch out!

I was a bit dubious about returning to work on the Thursday after getting a picture sent to me from one of my staff showing the golf course a foot deep in water again (not quite deep enough to row a boat though!). However I am pleased to say that my attempts at drainage work have paid off and the holes are dry and open for now.

Congratulations go to Allan Walker on his last minute call up for the Bernhard Delegation to the GCSAA Golf Show in Orlando. As a previous delegate to the Orlando show I know that you will have a great time, it is an amazing show and the Bernhards crew take good care of you. Work hard and play hard, that is the advice I can give you. By the time you read this he will have returned and I am sure that he will have many stories to tell!

By the time you read this we will have had our final winter seminar, due to be held on February 27 at Elisham Golf Club. It is going to be presented by the STRI on the Disturbance Theory and should be very interesting to all those who attend. A full report will be here next time.

A quick reminder that our first golf day of 2008 is going to be held on April 16 at Pottergate Golf Club, Lincoln. A full fixture list should have arrived with the letter sent out about the seminar.

All Section members are reminded to make full use of our website:
www.eastofenglandbigga.com

Anyone with any news to be mentioned on this page please contact me
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Steve Beverly Immingham Golf Club



BERKS/BUCKS AND OXON

Players' don't get relief from divots in fairways or footprints in bunkers. Why should they get relief from spike marks on greens?
Jeff Hall (USGA Spokesperson)

The BBO pigeon carrier service has been quite with little news to report over the three counties.

The much coveted ball and chain awaits Alistair Higgs from Blue Mountain GC who after having his arm twisted, with a night passion in his wagon (Cushman vehicle) has decided to tie the knot after proposing to Aimee his fiancée. Congratulations to you both.

Steve Chandler from Goring & Streatley GC had a blond moment and has recently consulted a Follicle Replacement Therapist and now on Sunday's can be seen batting with Graham Gooch, something must have gone to his head, Claire his fiancée of 15 years has accepted his proposal of marriage, Congratulations Steve, remember the pitter patter of tiny feet are just around the corner.

The Spring National Qualifier has been confirmed and this year will be held at Chiltern Forrest GC on Wednesday, April 23, also the Summer Tournament will be at Lambourn GC on the 17th July entry forms will be sent out early and can also be downloaded from the section website.
www.bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk

The Rigby Taylor Pairs final was played at The Berkshire G.C. in late autumn, and the finalists were blessed with a fine winter's day. The Red Course provided a true test of golf for both pairs although Barry Holt from Burford G.C. struggled with a sore back after the two cooked breakfasts that he polished off or was The Great Holty using mind games on his opponents.

As the day progressed it was neck and neck with neither team able to take a commanding lead, nor neither team moving more than two holes ahead.

Teams were all square on the 18th as a sudden death payoff ensued. Sid Arrowsmith, who goes by the nickname, steady Eddie, had not been his normal consistent self off the tee for most of the game. Sid stepped up to the plate and blasted a long straight drive down the middle of the 21st hole to win and be crowned the Rigby Taylor BB&O Pairs winners for 2007.

The opponents from Waterstock G.C., Dan Gascoyne and Paul Tipping, fought bravely and indeed at times seemingly had the title in the bag, provided fantastic camaraderie and with true team spirit conceded the Rigby Taylor Trophy to Barry and Sid.

A big thank you to Course Manager Chris Lomas for arranging courtesy of the Red Course for the final and Gareth Acteson from Rigby Taylor for organizing and ensuring that all the people who took part throughout 2007 had fantastic days as did the finalists at The Berkshire G.C. Entry forms for the 2008 competition are underway and will be sent out to all members shortly.

On the 23rd April this year, the Spring Tournament will be underway and hosted this year by Chiltern Forrest G.C. which nestles in the Chilterns on the edge of Wendover Woods.

This will be your chance to win a place for The National Tournament later in the year and to take on a real golfing challenge which is The Badger, a 160 yard par 3 which is featured in the book "The 100 most extraordinary holes in England" and believe me you are in for a real surprise, especially if the wind blows. Enough said. Remember to put this date in your diary.

Entry forms will be sent out in good time with the TH White section fixture card for 2008 and details and information can also be downloaded from the section website which is bbo-greenkeepers.co.uk

If anyone out there has any news of views please get in touch.
Have a great 2008

Mark Day mark.day@tacitgolf.com



MID-ANGLIA

South Beds Golf Club hosted the Turkey Trot way back at the start of December and the results were as follows: 1. South Beds GC, J. Smith, M. Davies, D. Mennie and P. Compton. 2. Berkhamsted GC, L. Rance, D. Quinlan, M. Wood, G. Ravenscroft. 3. Mount Pleasant GC, G. Simkins, B. Brown, D. Hodkin, S. Moss. Longest Drive was won by Dale Housden and Nearest the Pin was Steve Moss. Special thanks go to Barry McCloskey, of Avoncrop, for generously sponsoring the prizes. Thanks also to all the other members of the trade for supporting the day and thanks to South Beds Golf Club for hosting the event. I understand the course was in exceptional condition and was a great credit to Tom Hooper and his dedicated team. Golfer of the Year was won by Steve Mason, from Stocks Golf Club, who did comment that the criteria was very complicated and, most crucially, he was the only one that could afford the bribe! Seriously though, well done, Steve.

For those of you that are acquainted with Mark Day, from Tacit, please take time to visit www.justgiving.com/markday1 as Mark is running the London Marathon this year in aid of the charity SENSE. On behalf of the Mid-Anglia Section, I would like to wish you the very best of luck and hope all goes well.

Some of the more senior members of the Section who may remember the days when Mods, Rockers, Scooters and the Brighton scene were the vogue may be interested to know that in April it will be 30 years since the making of the film Quadrophenia. To celebrate the anniversary there is to be a reunion for the cast of the film and guess who is going? None other than our own Mark Ellis who appeared as an extra due largely to the fact that he lived in the Brighton area and was the proud owner of a Vespa (I think he still makes some deliveries on it!). Oh yeah, and man can he act!

Starring alongside Mark were many other young budding actors and musician, many of which have suffered at the merciless hands of destiny and fate. Take Phil Daniels for example. He became a drunk in bar run by the Pub Landlord before moving to Walford Square to eek out a living



Around the Green



KENT

Finally some spring-like weather, skies are blue, the sun is beaming down gloriously, hoards of happy people are whistling away as they pass by, seagulls swoop majestically over the clear, blue ocean, the sand is starting to get too hot to walk on...Hold it! I hear you say. That doesn't sound like a normal February day in downtown Dartford!

That's because I'm not in Dartford, I'm on a beach in Tenerife and thoroughly making the most of a well earned winter break!

Back in good old Blighty I recently posted out close to 300 calendars to all of you in the Kent Section. These were the brainchild of several but pretty much individually produced by Danny Stunt, of Redlibbets Golf Club. Superb job mate and thank you. These must-have adornments for your desktop not only highlight our five golf days and all our sponsors, they contain some great photos of courses in our area. If you have not yet received one then please leave a message on the webpage, alternatively I shall bring a few to our first event at The London Club on March 25. We hope these calendars will become an annual production run to all of you. Entries will be limited to the London Club event for our National Qualifier so please don't delay in returning your forms to David.

We are also still compiling an event calendar for 2009 and would ask any of you interested in hosting a golf event to let us know. It really isn't as daunting as you think!

Sorry for the short report this month but I need to roll over before my back burns too much.

Happy holidays!

Rob Holland



SOUTH WEST & WALES REGION – SOUTH WEST

I started last month by remarking how quickly the winter has evaporated in front of our eyes. By the time this one comes into print, we'll have started Spring renovation of greens and really be thinking about the mowing season. At Minch, we'll be continuing to Drill and Fill greens using the Ecosolve machine, and will combine this with deep scarifying, mini hollow tining, and vertidrainage. Some greens get up to four passes on pretty well the same day. The thinking behind this is lots of holes and disruption for a short time only, and then leave things alone. Sounds a bit drastic, but this has worked really well over the last few seasons, and allowed us to get the greens off to a good start early in the season. Michael Evans, who for years was Greens Chairman at my last club Lilley Brook, used to comment – "it's surprising what you can do to grass – it just keeps coming back" – hope he's right!

Harrogate Week was an outstanding success. Big thanks to all HQ staff, officers, and rank and file greenkeepers who contributed so much to make it so. Congratulations to Tim Needham, whose letter won the South West Section Patronage Scheme-sponsored place. One or two little wrinkles from

as a dodgy car dealer only to die in one of his cut and shut motors! Sting played in a band made up from members of the "Old Bill", tried to save the world by singing and was last seen half way up the Amazon rain forest. As for greengrocer's son, Ray Winstone, apart from a few minor films, lavish screenplays and more notably voicing over the part of Soldier Sam in the Magic Roundabout, nobody's ever heard of him. Whereas Mark went on to a glamorous lifestyle of managing exclusive Country Clubs such as Mentmore and Stocks before jetting off to Spain as a gigolo only to return to his current position at Vassgro. Well good luck Mark, I hope you enjoy the reunion and don't waste too much time signing autographs.

After making the article last month, Jim Cassidy, from Ashridge, can't keep out of the news. Jim is off to Golden Eagle Golf Club near Lisbon in Portugal to manage the golf course. Good luck to you and your family Jim and keep in contact.

Craig Spooner craig.spooner@advanta-seeds.co.uk



SOUTH EAST REGION – SURREY

Wednesday, February 6. My 2008 New Year resolution is not intact any longer and it's all the fault of the greenkeepers who were supposed to look out for me at Harrogate. Ron Christie and Douglas Fernie, how can you have let me slip on the muddy ground outside Rigatoni's restaurant and blame it on excessive wine when you both know about my unfortunate medical inability to tolerate even the smallest quantity of the evil drink. Whoever slipped that small sherry into my Cherryade ought to feel ashamed that my resolution, not to indulge this year, has failed again and I must now wait until 2009 for another opportunity. Oh well, never mind, here's to next year's vintage.

There are out there, in this greenkeeping industry, some who will want to enter the knockout Surrey Bowl. If you have not received an entry form please contact Roger Tydeman, he's the man in charge or even the Tydeman in charge, on his mobile 07711399036. The deadline is April 1.

Most members will remember, Mark Day, a larger than life character when he used to call on you, in Surrey, a few years ago. Well Mark has lost a little weight and has decided to run in the London Marathon this year for charity. He needs sponsors so if you have a few pence to spare please contact him on 07887723377.

One of Surrey Section's members latest addition to the worlds population belongs to Mairead and Craig Earnshaw, Oak Park GC. Padraig, 8lbs, was born on January 17. Congratulations and good luck to you all.

After a happy event it is with regret that I have to report on the accidental death of a young Surrey greenkeeper. Scott Swanson, the 17 year old son of Head Greenkeeper, Steve Swanson, was killed in a vehicle accident just before his 18th birthday. Our deepest sympathy to Scott's family and friends.

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