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Craig Gilholm, Course Manager, Royal Liverpool

“SGC are very professional - the finish achieved was beyond our expectations ”

Gareth Roberts, Course Manager, Hankley Common

	Timescale	MATERIALS USED	ACCURACY OF FINISH
LEVEL BY HAND	2-4 WEEKS	60 – 100 TONS	+/- 50mm
SGC LASER TEE RENOVATION	½ - 1 DAY	5– 10 TONS	+/-5mm

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- Saves thousands on construction of new tees
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Contact: Stephen Senior, Tel: 07752989863
Email: stephen@seniorgolfconstruction.com

www.seniorgolfconstruction.com

PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

Scott MacCallum visited the Pesticide Safety Directorate to get some answers to the industry's burning questions on the future availability of pesticides in the sector and on the dangers of using illegal products.

In recent years dates have occasionally resonated around the industry proclaiming when the use of pesticides would no longer be allowed on golf courses – a sort of doomsday you could say. These has invariably been followed by the counter argument that it's all hot air and will never happen - common sense with prevail.

So what is the genuine position and what is in store for the greenkeeping industry over the next few years?

To get an answer to that and a series of other questions where better to go than the Pesticide Safety Directorate (PSD), which is the regulatory authority for pesticides in the UK and the body in charge of developing and implementing the legislation which comes out of Westminster and Brussels?

Grant Stark and Paul Adamson are senior officials with PSD and they took time to outline the work of the Directorate and explain the background to some of the stories we read in the press and rumours that whistle round the industry.

And the answer to the burning question?

Well, yes there are a couple of key dates 2012 and 2014 - but it mightn't be as bad as is feared, and strenuous efforts are being made to minimise the impact it will have.

"2012, will see the completion of the pesticide active substance review programme. There are something like 900 pesticide active substances in use across the European Union. The review programme will see that figure reduced to around 300 – 400 by the time work is completed in 2012-comparative figures for the UK are around half those for Europe as a whole," said Grant, whose work covers the amenity sector. "That's a substantial loss of chemistry right across the European Union. It might mean that some methods of control may prove to be difficult" he explained.

On top of this, the EU is reviewing the law which sets out the criteria pesticides need to meet in order to be approved for use in the future. Grant explained that the law which sets these criteria is being developed under a complicated process known as the co-decision procedure. This involves the Council (the EU institution which represents the member states) and European Parliament (which represents the citizens) coming together with the Commission to agree a text. Before they come together for their negotiations, they look separately at a proposal and come up with a

number of amendments.

Grant said that the European Parliament has taken a relatively precautionary view on the risks associated with the use of pesticides and want this bar to be set at a comparatively high level. This could result in substantially more products being taken out of the system. In general the Council takes a less precautionary view and would like the bar set at levels that reduce risk to acceptable levels while enabling users to maintain sufficient protection from pests and diseases. While everyone accepts that the bar should be raised the effect of the Council and Parliament's amendments are relatively far apart on where this ought to be. Despite this there appears to be an appetite in Brussels to reach a deal by the end of the year on the new law.

The 2014 deadline is an important feature of another proposed new pesticide law – a directive on the sustainable use of pesticides. All professional users of pesticides will be required to use 'integrated approaches' by 2014.

An integrated approach is one where you don't automatically think of pesticides as the first port of call, but instead go back to the beginning and look at the original design of how everything is

from a lot of member states. It should mean best usage practices being drawn from across the EU." So where do those rumours and headlines about blanket pesticide bans come from?

"The prospect of a blanket ban was raised in discussions on the sustainable use directive. The European Parliament considered on a series of amendments prepared by its Environment Committee – which took an extremely precautionary view on the risk associated with the use of pesticides and so proposed some severe restrictions, including bans on use in public spaces. The Parliament as a whole though was less precautionary and rejected calls for the more severe restrictions.

"Indications are that the Council and Commission are less precautionary still, so we await to see what sort of text emerges when the three institutions come together towards the end of this year. It's important to keep an eye on the discussions to make sure overly severe restrictions are not re-introduced, lobbying MEPs is an effective way of making your voice heard," said Grant.

He added that in his opinion golf was quite well placed to cope with the forthcoming changes, compared to other sectors, as he understood

“ There are something like 900 pesticide active substances in use across the European Union. The review programme will see that figure reduced to around 300 – 400 by the time work is completed in 2012 ”

set up so as to minimise the incidence of weeds coming through and consider a range of vegetation management options. A more sustainable approach if you like. "This approach is already very well embedded in agriculture and its use of pesticides. Many of the contracts signed between farmers and supermarkets make specific reference to farming in an integrated fashion. Greater use of integrated approaches in the amenity sector may help offset some of the difficulties associated with the loss of products" said Grant.

The new directive will require member states to set up national action plans for pesticides and work toward the reduction of risk from using them. Grant said that the directive is expected to include a number of 'best practice' measures on things such as training of users, distributors and advisors, testing of application equipment, protection of watercourses, public spaces and conservation areas. Grant explained, "We already have these sort of measures in the UK but they are missing

there was already a good knowledge of what is "best practice".

PSD puts a lot of emphasis on people going out and getting professional advice from organisations such as BASIS, who can guide users in the right direction. "Our understanding is that the golf course sector understands the need to use pesticides in a way which is consistent with 'best practice' and takes specialist advice. We would look to encourage all users to go out and look at their vegetation management strategies and investigate integrated management approaches - take a more holistic approach rather than just using chemicals," explained Grant.

What about the enforcement of legal controls on pesticides?

PSD was formed in 1987 following on from the first pesticide regulations which came into being the previous year. Initially it was a division of the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods before becoming an Executive Agency of DEFRA. It was

VIEW FROM THE AMENITY FORUM

An integrated approach to managing golf courses has been a priority for greenkeepers for some time. In fact within the amenity sector it has been the greenkeepers who have led the way with good management practices aimed at reducing, and hopefully eliminating the need to use a pesticide. But despite good management there will continue to be a need to use a herbicide, fungicide and/or an insecticide to establish and maintain first class turf. The question most greenkeepers ask me is how long will we be able to continue to have pesticides available to use? We are already losing the products we need to control worms, leatherjackets and the many other pests of turf. Herbicides are also being withdrawn – diuron, dichlobenil to name a few.

The UK has had a statutory legal framework for the control of pesticides use for over 20 years and overall it works well. This risk-based approach considers carefully evaluated scientific data, periodically reviewed by an independent body, it is a good system so why change it? These Regulations are backed up by a Code of Practice, training schemes to maintain up to date certification, and some very sophisticated application equipment.

We know that in Denmark no pesticides are allowed on golf courses but so far we have not seen any evidence to justify this decision – it is based on ‘concerns’ for safety! Is it a real possibility that this approach could be adopted in the new EU Directive for the sustainable use of pesticides? Greenkeepers need to know that the UK negotiating team are working very hard to get more support for the UK position as at the moment it seems that our approach is in a minority within the EU.

The decision will ultimately be made by MEPs voting in the EU Parliament in September/October and everyone who will be affected by the decision



must act now and contact their own local MEPs to make sure they understand the impact a prohibition on the use of pesticides in amenity situations will have. As Chairman of the Amenity Forum I will be writing to all MEPs again with a briefing note to raise their awareness. If you would like a copy to help you speak to your MEP contact Bob Joice at robert.joice@farmline.com , or Jon Allbutt at jon@jonallbutt.co.uk .

Jon Allbutt, Chairman, Amenity Forum

AMENITY FORUM CONFERENCE

The Amenity Forum is hosting a one day conference at the Heath and Safety Executive Headquarters in London on October 2.

Included on the programme Chaired by Ian Mearns, Vice Chair of the Local Government Association Environment Board, will be a Legislation Update on EU and UK Pesticide Policy delivered by Adrian Dixon, of the Pesticides Safety Directorate, and Jo Kennedy, of the Environment Agency, while Jon Allbutt, Chairman of the Amenity Forum, will speak on Determining the Usage and Usage Patterns of Amenity Pesticides across the UK.

Also included on the programme is a Keynote Address from Lord McKenzie, Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Department of Work and Pensions with responsibility for the HSE, and Solutions to Best Practice Management - management from three managers in key amenity areas.

In total the day includes seven papers and a closing Panel Session and Chairman's Summary. Anyone seeking to attend should contact: Bob Joice, The Amenity Forum, 43 Park Drive, Mirfield, West Yorks WF14 9NJ or email: robert.joice@farmline.com

moved to its present home in York, in September 1994. It has recently become an Executive Agency of the Health and Safety Executive and its 180 staff carry out critical evaluation of accredited data that is provided by companies which want chemicals approved.

Paul is part of a team charged with policing the pesticide regulations in the UK and attempts to clamp down on the illegal use of unapproved products.

"In simplistic terms if a product is not approved for a job it is a breach of the law to use it. Indeed the way the law works is that all pesticides are banned unless they have specific approval" explained Paul.

The general tightening of controls on pesticides over the last 20 years has already led to the loss of pesticides which we now consider to have unacceptable effects. Generally more toxic, persistent and potentially environmentally damaging chemicals have been replaced by more targeted, pest specific and less damaging pesticides.

"This reduction in availability can be a problem if you are dealing with hard to control pests or weeds and this may tempt people to use an unapproved or otherwise illegal product such as using an agricultural product in an amenity situation. The loss of some organophosphate insecticides, which although highly effective were also pretty indiscriminate in destroying beneficial insect species, means you really need to think

through your use of pesticides."

The use of illegal or unapproved products is something which Paul and his team spend a lot of time investigating and they have some severe sanctions for those who are caught using any unapproved chemicals.

"If someone is using an agricultural product in an amenity situation the risks are likely to be different to those which they are used to. It might be the risks are very similar but it could be that they are very different leading to real danger to the person who is applying the chemical."

"Or it may be that the environment suffers because the product gets into water more easily or is more concentrated. For each approved use of a product the risks and hazards to the operator and the environment are taken into account when approval is granted. Using the product in an unapproved way means that is no longer the case.

Paul is well aware of the pressures some greenkeepers are under to find the cheapest option to control a pest or weed but the dangers of using a product in a non-approved areas and manner are real.

"We have powers to seize illegal products and have them disposed off and to recover the costs from the perpetrator - it's one of the ultimate sanctions. If we take a case to prosecution the maximum fine for each offence is £5000 in a Magistrates' Court or an unlimited fine in Crown

Court and that fine may be against an individual or a golf club."

However, Paul is not a fan of prosecution.

"Prosecution is usually a last resort as it's very expensive and time consuming, from our perspective it is more effective to seize the offending pesticide and charge for disposal and to advise on how to avoid problems in the future. We can also issue enforcement notices which require corrective actions to be taken, and because these have no simple right of appeal they are an effective enforcement tool."

If people do go ahead and continue to use off-label products what's the worst case scenario?

"That depends very much on the product but effects could range from minor issues such as skin irritation to more severe effects. It is the operator who is put at risk initially and that is something I want to avoid," said Paul.

The same is true from an environmental perspective where unapproved pesticides may have a range of short or long term effects gradually degrading an eco system for example damage to watercourses or knock on effects on wildlife.

So the message coming out is despite the possible reductions in the availability of chemicals you currently rely on don't take unnecessary risks and use illegal or unapproved products. If you have not already done so, to take a look at your management practices to ensure that you are not caught out when 2014 comes around.



Hobbies

Here's something you didn't know about me...

Name: Will Harris
Position: Machinery Manager
Club: Minchinhampton GC
Hobby: Restoring Cars

"As you can see - the car was a complete wreck when I came across it" commented Will - "but in the time it's taken to restore it I've fathered two children, and am well on the way to putting one of them through university! I originally got it as a potential 'babe magnet' - but lately it's developed into more of a retirement project!"

If nothing else - this amazing vehicle underlines Will's mechanical skills and patience.



Before...



After...

Minchinhampton Golf Club Machinery Manager Will Harris showing off his pride and joy - a Volvo 1800-S dating back to 1966, which he has restored himself, virtually from scratch.

IF YOU SOW IT THEY WILL COME



Level Par is a unique blend of velvet bent grasses from BSH. With unrivalled shoot density and a very fine leaf, the combination of Avalon and new Vesper produces an enviable putting surface. But the benefits don't stop there. Once established, the dense sward has a lower nutrient requirement than any other commercial bent grasses, so your greens won't cost the Earth.

Visit www.bshamenity.com to download our 2008 seed catalogue, or call 01522 868714 to contact your regional advisor.



Letters

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Sunday, July 6 – Belleisle Golf Club

Another Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich, the weather is reasonable, but overcast with a light, slightly warm, west wind.

When I left Lenzie in the early morning it was wet and unpleasant. By the time I had passed the 'South Ayrshire' road sign everything changed with a distinct improvement, weather wise.

Again an excellent turnout, for what is now considered a family gathering, with the families ages ranging from 14 years old, to over 80, both male and female.

The competition followed the usual format, stableford, partners drawn in fours, and the best two scores counting – I must say, one of the more civilised forms for a game of golf.

Belleisle Golf Course never looked better, Kevin Johnson and his greenkeeping staff, are to be commended on their presentation of a course, manicured for the pleasure and pleasantry for a game of golf.

This year five greenkeepers competed to have their names inscribed on the quaich, but the hand of fate (or better golf) decided the winners were: D Hollingworth, L McClure, J Ridge, and R McGuire returning a remarkable score of 89 points.

The presentation of the quaich and prizes involved Harry's family. The quaich was presented by Harry's wife Jessie. Harry's daughter did an excellent job with the raffle, calling out the winners through the hand held microphones, which gave the afternoon an atmosphere of joviality.

All the children were in charge of setting up the raffle and Hugh, Harry's brother, was involved with the prize giving.

There was a new Diamond face this year, Harry's niece came over from America, and she said a few words about Uncle Harry and his commitments to the family.

This tournament has become a must, for the members of Belleisle, and her sister course Seafield, with everyone so involved, the golfers feel part of the family which makes the whole affair go from strength to strength – long may this continue.

The family wish to thank all who assisted, from those who donated prizes to others who made cash donations, not forgetting the small group who meet to organise and run The Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich.

A great tournament, a great day of golf in memory of a great friend.

Cecil George
Lenzie

Please email your letters to
Scott MacCallum, scott@bigga.co.uk
or Melissa Jones, melissa@bigga.co.uk
or post to:
BIGGA House,
Aldwark Manor,
Alne, York YO61 1UF

THANK YOU

On behalf of everyone at Royal Birkdale Golf Club I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the BIGGA volunteers for their support with bunker raking and fairway divotting duties during the Open Championship.

It is no exaggeration to say that we could not have managed without your help.

Once again many thanks for your valuable assistance, it is much appreciated.

Chris Whittle, Course Manager, Royal Birkdale GC

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Just a reminder that the BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Kubota, is to be held on October 5 and 6.

Children's Heart Surgery Fund



30 July 2008

Mr John Pemberton
British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association
Bigga House
Aldwark
Alne
York
YO61 1UF

Dear Mr Pemberton

Thank you very much for the kind donation of £2,144.12, which you made to the Children's Heart Surgery Fund following the Golf Day.

The CHSF, a registered charity, continues to enhance the quality of care available to children with heart defects treated at the Yorkshire Heart Centre, Leeds General Infirmary.

As we endeavour to fulfil our aim through the provision of new equipment not available within NHS resources, grants which enable staff to increase their expertise, world renowned research projects and by creating a happy relaxed atmosphere for the children who often have to return for further surgery; I am most grateful to you for your support.

Our aim remains "each child a childhood" and your donation will be used towards this goal.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Exley
On Behalf of the Children's Heart Surgery Fund

Tel: 0113 392 8531
Fax: 0113 392 8074
Email: chsf@leedsth.nhs.uk
Web: www.chs.org.uk

Children's Heart Surgery Fund • E floor • The Jubilee Building • Yorkshire Heart Centre • Leeds General Infirmary • Leeds LS1 3EX



News from the Chief Executive

The relationship between BIGGA and the Greenkeepers Training Committee (the GTC) is often misunderstood. The GTC was established in the late 1980's to develop, monitor and maintain a set of national standards, vocational qualifications and associated learning material for greenkeeping, working within a Government approved structure. It is governed by a committee comprised of representation from the English Golf Union, the Scottish Golf Union, the Welsh Golf Union and BIGGA.

Until recently the R&A were also included. From the outset it was funded by way of a levy of 2p per male golfer who was a registered member of a club. The home Unions collected the fee and passed it on to the GTC while the European Tour and BIGGA made a contribution, the R&A then match funded the total sum collected. In 1989 the R&A published a discussion document of British golf course management entitled "The Way Forward" in which it is quoted, "It goes without saying that the 2p levy, while a start, is a totally inadequate contribution from golf clubs in terms of a really meaningful impact being made on greenkeeper education. There must be a continuous effort to raise this levy to a realistic figure with perhaps 50p a first target, increasing to £1."

Where is the GTC 20 years further on? The levy has increased, despite a certain amount of resistance from the Home Unions over the years, to an astounding 11.5p! The R&A will after this year cease to make a financial contribution, instead diverting its attention and resources to developing the game of golf overseas. Let's make no mistake that funding over the years has been significant and has helped the GTC to develop greenkeeper education to a point where it leads the way with British land based training and qualifications, so much so that its learning material is now being sought after by many of the emerging overseas greenkeeping associations.

The GTC in its current format is no longer a financially viable operation and attempts to increase the levy on the golfer, and/or perhaps include female golfers, have been unsuccessful. With a steady drifting away from club membership the Unions are finding themselves under pressure to maintain status quo let alone consider an increase. As the number of members starts to decline so does the income for the GTC.

One of the main questions that no one has yet managed to answer is "How do we get the casual golfer to contribute towards greenkeeper training?" The simple answer would be to apply a small levy to the green fee but it is unlikely that clubs will go along with this. They, I am sure, would see this as an erosion of their own income.

Unless a solution is found to the funding gap of the GTC then it may need to be wound up. Its role could then be taken over by either the EGU, the SGU or the WGU or perhaps somehow incorporated into BIGGA's Learning and Development Department. As a director of the GTC and as Chief Executive of BIGGA I have more than a passing interest in the future of the GTC and will continue to work with the Home Unions and David Golding (Director of Education, GTC) to try to find a workable solution.

John Pemberton
Chief Executive



SCOTTISH REGION - CENTRAL

The Section had a successful evening on August 20, when David Cole, from Loch Lomond Golf Club, gave a presentation on the work involved in preparing and staging the Scottish Open. Thanks once again David and good luck in your new position at Loch Lomond, you have got off to a great start.

Following on from that, on Wednesday, September 10, at 7pm, we have Stan Kostka talking about wetting agent technology. Stan is Director of Research and Development with Aquatrols in the US and is on a visit to the UK. We are very fortunate to be able to attract people like Stan to come and share their knowledge with us and he comes on the recommendation of Richard Windows who recently attended a presentation by him. The event will be at the greenkeeping facility at Elmwood GC.

This is also the venue for the Section AGM which will be held on Monday, October 27 at 1.30pm, in conjunction with a presentation by Martin Heywood of Aquadrop, who will talk on improving the quality of your irrigation water. There are a number of their installations across Scotland, now including one at The Castle Course where we have been able to drop the bi carbonates from over 250mg/l to 150mg/l as well as lowering the ph.

The Committee will be proposing Gordon McKie, of St Andrews Links, as Chairman. Normally, Gordon would spend some time as Vice Chairman before taking the hot seat but with the departure of our current Vice, Alan Sharp, to Essex Gordon won't have the luxury of easing himself into the job.

The Committee is looking for nominations for a new Vice Chairman from October and would be pleased to receive nominations before the AGM. Please contact the Secretary, Andy Mellon.

We would also be pleased to hear of any particular educational events you would like, particularly for late February/early March. The Committee was thinking of staging some management training on items such as Managing people, confidence building, assertiveness and team building.

These courses are expensive to run so we would need some commitment before arranging them. We shall try and get some more exact costs and information and this will be posted on the website www.biggacentralsection.org.uk - where we would also be pleased to hear your thoughts and comments.

The website has been quiet recently but hopefully it will pick up again now the golfing season is passing.

On the move has been Kevin Webster, from Milnathort GC to Leven GC. Kevin also got married in July and used to play off a handicap of one, welcome to the real world Kevin. Chris Ross, of the Dukes Course, also got married in early July and by the end of the month had lost his wedding ring. There's no truth in the rumour that his workmates organised a search party in 'Fat



Sam's nightclub in Dundee. Best of luck to you both for the future.

Finally, I believe Gary McCandless and Jim Smith have taken over Mike Dennis's role at Rigby Taylor following his retirement. Two people to replace you Mike, you must have been some guy, and you managed to play all that golf with Derek.

Gordon Moir



EAST

The regular topic of conversation among greenkeepers at present is the appalling weather, with tropical style downpours becoming the norm.

On Thursday, August 7, the greenkeepers at St. Boswells GC arrived at work to find most of the 9 hole course flooded when the River Tweed burst its banks. The following day the waters had receded but left behind mounds of debris in the form of logs, branches and silt. A huge clean up operation is currently underway.

On Friday, August 8, developers, Manor Kingdom, announced their intention to apply for planning permission for a major development at Rutherford Castle, near West Linton. The plans include a luxury hotel, houses and a championship golf course. The original course, which opened in the late 90's, was the brainchild of farmer Henry Wallace. The course designer at the time was Dalbeattie-based Brian Moore, of OCM Associates.

The committee have asked me to remind you of the following upcoming events:

Autumn Outing, September 9, Kingsknowe Golf Club;

Willie Woods, October 9, West Linton Golf Club;

AGM, October 30, Dundas Park - the AGM will be preceded by a lecture from Gary Smith, of Scotts.

The East committee is currently hard at work putting together a programme of lectures, on interesting topics, for the Autumn/Winter period. By next month, hopefully, I will have a list of speakers and dates for your diary.

I spoke briefly last month of price increases which many of you will have noticed with the rapid rise in costs of red diesel. This year you the end user will not have noticed the rapid rise in costs of fertiliser and grass seed, however next year all distributors will have to pass all or at least some of these costs on!

Until Next Month

Mike Dooner



NORTH

I start with the news that a sharp eyed member, namely John Geddes, spotted recently in the P & J a certain Dougal Duguid playing Westhill golf course and he had had a hole in one. If this is the same Dougal who was Chairman of the Section then John was wondering if you would be making an appearance at the next outing at Kirriemuir in your Mexican bandit attire.

Everyone I have spoken to recently is looking forward to the outing at Kirriemuir and hopefully we will have a good turnout.

Please get your forms into Dale as soon as you can. Jim assures me that the course will be in pristine condition and this will be even more of an achievement due to him being in the veterans' section! Sorry Jim couldn't resist.

In the coming month we have a team going down to play in the Norrie Whittock Trophy. Hopefully we'll have better luck this year. Hugh Mclatchie is playing along with two lads from Peterculter and one from Fortrose. Good luck lads and we hope to get a report on the day's event in next month's edition along with all the results and goings' on from Kirrie.

Two former work mates of mine are expecting. Well not them literally but their wives, but looking at them both you wouldn't dismiss it.

Well done Stephen Brown on your fourth but you've along way to go to catch up with Rossco Macrae, at Huntly, who is expecting his seventh. Are you stopping there Ross or are you going for the full football team? Anyway well done and I will report in due course how they get on.

The Head Greenkeeper of Portlethen GC, Aberdeen, Neil Sadler, has recently got married. On behalf of the Section I would like to offer our congratulations. Does this mean you'll be turning up at less outings now?

That's as much news as I've got this month people but again, sorry to keep saying it but it is your Section news and for it to be a worthwhile read we need as much info as possible.

Give me a shout on: 07813889374.

Hope to see everyone at Kirriemuir, faces old and some new ones if we can. Come along and see what it's all about. It really isn't that bad.

We have nearly 300 members so let's see how many we can get.

Have a good month

Ben Brookes

Murcar Links



Around the Green



WEST

Welcome to this month's report, sorry for no reports over the last couple of months, it's hard to write when there's no information coming in.

I attended the Scottish tournament at Irvine GC during June and had a fantastic day's golf, many thanks to Derek Wilson and his staff as the course was first class, as commented on by players throughout the day. Congratulations to all the prize winners.

On the football front we're still up for a challenge from any other Section so please get in touch to arrange a game.

This year's night out will be held at the Comedy Club, dates to be confirmed probably around the end of November, tickets will be on sale from committee members.

Our AGM will be held at Renfrew Golf Club during October, there will also be a seminar hosted by Scott's and golf provided at the end, date to be confirmed members will be lettered with more information.

We will be playing our annual match against the steward during November at Douglas Park GC, dates will be printed in my next report.

Hopefully by next month the weather will be a little better as it hasn't stopped raining for the last month, well that's all for now see you next month hopefully with more information on Section news.

Fraser Ross
07970 366 355



NORTHERN REGION - NORTH EAST

There were 29 teams of three playing in the Regional Qualifier of the John Deere Team Championship at Close House, of which 28 represented local clubs (John Deere pays £25 per team to BIGGA). The forecast was not good, but they were very lucky and seemed to avoid the rain for most of the day.

An enjoyable day was had by all with everyone commenting on the excellent condition of the course, our compliments to Brian Clark and his staff, thanks also to Steve Pope for representing BIGGA North East and for helping with the scoring on the day - Steve has helped every time with the competition and we couldn't do it without him.

First place (after count back) went to Barry Walker and his team from the City of Newcastle GC, who will have already played in at Turnberry by the time you receive this, 2nd was Alnmouth GC, 3rd Tyneside GC - only one shot separated those teams.

Congratulations are in order for Steven Richardson (my son) of Tyneside GC on his recent marriage on August 2. Also, welcome back to greenkeeping to Michael McKenna who has started working at Hexham GC after been out of the profession for a few months.

Hexham GC are in the news again - an extension to their current work shed is likely to get the go-ahead once planning permission is granted, work is expected to commence in late summer.

As you can see my email address has changed any news is welcome.

Jimmy Richardson
jamesrichardson217@btinternet.com



NORTH WEST

I am sure many people, more knowledgeable than I am, have said this: congratulations to Chris Whittle and all the staff that helped to make this year's Open so successful. The course was in magnificent condition as me and my Deputy, Simon, found out on the Tuesday.

We took time to visit Chris and his staff and were so surprised as to how laid back they were, with everything happening all around them, it was a testament to their professionalism and a pleasure to gain some inside information on the preparation of the course. Well done also to the Support Team, it could not have been easy with the weather conditions as they were.

Last but not least well done to John and Scott and all involved at BIGGA House in organising the Support Team and the facilities at The Open for the greenkeepers. I am always blown away with the organisation involved with The Open and it's great to know that the Greenkeeping Association forms a major part of it.

I know that every time I write these notes I ask for members to contact me but no-one ever does, well why don't you send any ideas you have on how you would like to see the Section go forward. Do you want seminars in the winter? Do you have suggestions for the spring seminar? Do you want to have functions where our wives can be invited? Are you happy with the format for the golf tournaments? Any views would be gratefully received.

I can be contacted on: 0151 2894625
or my email is: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



SHEFFIELD

Firstly, I would just like to say sorry about the lack of news lately, please get in touch with me about anything at all then at least we will have some news in our Section!

On July 7, we held our annual competition at Grange Park Golf Club - who I would like to thank for giving us the courtesy of their course, it is much appreciated.

Thanks go to Steve Pickering and his staff for the excellent condition of Grange! Well done Steve.

Thanks also to Dave and Russ from Mansfield Sand for once again sponsoring the competition, everyone appreciates your support. Thanks as well to the catering staff for providing us with an excellent meal.

As usual there was some very good golf played, especially if you were from Chesterfield Golf Club (top three places), the eventual winner was Matt Kiegher with a nett 72, well done Matt.

The Best Gross winner was Darren Coop with a gross 75, well done Darren.

The results were:

1st M Keigher, nett 72;

2nd A Bunting, nett 73;

3rd D Coop, nett 74bb9;

4th S Brown, nett 74bb3 (watch your handicap!);

5th J Stevens, nett 74;

Nearest the Pin on 6th was won by A Unwin and on the 16th by A Riley.

The Guest Winner was Tony Dobson with a nett 76.

The Sheffield Section versus the Northern Section match was held at Ottley Golf Club - unfortunately we lost it 4-2, oh well better luck next time lads.

The day was organised and sponsored by Mike Brier, from Rigby Taylor, thanks for your support of both Sections.

Any news please contact me on: 07793111845
or email me at: jvl1967@sky.com

John Lax



NORTH WALES

With the kids going back to school and the days shortening autumn is well and truly in the air, with that in mind, don't forget to dig out your entry forms for the autumn tournament and AGM at Upton GC (ch2 .lee) on 8th October, the AGM was really well attended last year it would be impressive if we could keep that level of attendance again this year. Anyone who can't find their entry forms can get in touch with Jeremy Hughes if they want to book a tee time.

The BIGGA website now has details of regional fixtures and events, all you have to do is sign on to their site, www.bigga.org.uk and click on calendar/events it's that easy!

In local news Steve Roberts has taken his experience to a new club as he has taken up the position of Head Greenkeeper at Northop GC.

Bryn Roberts, of Eaton GC, married in Jersey in August I'm reliably informed, I'm sure we all wish him and his new wife a long and happy marriage.

On a sad note Paul Davies, of Conwy GC, passed away after a very short illness on July 9, aged 53, The Section as a whole pass on their sympathy to his family and friends.

Pete Maybury 07756001187

Johnny Evans

Johnny.Evans @tesco.net



MIDLAND REGION - MIDLANDS

Well what happened to the supposed drought we were promised for this summer? Strikes me that we have had a year very similar to last year. Come on now, all on your knees and pray to Ra to come out and play.

Please don't forget to attend our AGM which is being held at Fulford Heath GC on September 25, at 6:30pm. Please attend your thoughts are of great importance to your hard working committee. We cannot serve you if we don't know what you want!

The Section's thanks go to Nia Frost/Scotts for this month's calendar page. Please visit: www.scottspromotional.co.uk for your fertiliser needs.

Well that's about it for this month. If you want more in our notes then please inform me of any news on the well published channels.

Sean McDade



Around the Green



EAST OF ENGLAND

Well September has arrived and I am sure most people are saying, "where has the summer gone?" that's if we actually had more than a week of consecutive summer weather!

Everyone's thoughts will now be turning to autumn maintenance programmes, how much aeration and other work can be done to those surfaces we have so delicately prepared for the last few months. I am sure we will all be faced with the same question from members, "the greens looked so good, why do you have to do all this damage to them?" If anyone has any tips, or different techniques they are trying this year, and would like to share them with the rest of us, then let me know.

Our last golf day was held at Gainsborough Golf Club on July 8. A good turnout, reasonable weather and a well-conditioned golf course ensured a good day was had by all.

The day was won by Graeme MacDonald - finally winning an event after coming close in the last couple. Second place went to Rob Bemment and third place to Brian Robinson. The Trade winner was Ian Collett and James Sharp got Nearest the Pin.

Many thanks to all at Gainsborough Golf Club for making us feel so welcome and to Toro and Nigel Lovatt for sponsoring the day.

Our next event is our match vs the secretaries, which will be taking place at Radcliffe on Trent on September 24. The team will be being organised by Rob Welford so he will let those playing know in due course.

Our Section champions for the year are as follows: Steve Hopkins, Main Order of Merit. Rob Bemment, Under 25s Order of Merit. Gary Cooper, Trade Order of Merit.

National Championship Qualifiers, sponsored by Kubota, are as follows: Graeme MacDonald, 0-9 handicap; Brian Robinson, 10-18 handicap; Chris Wilkinson, 19-28 handicap.

Congratulations to all above champions and to everybody who won prizes during our individual golf days this year. Also many thanks to all competitors, organisers, golf clubs and sponsors for making our golf days a success.

A reminder about our final two golf days of 2008, they are the AGM Texas Scramble at Belton Park on October 2 and our Christmas pairs bring and win event at Holme Hall on December 8 - more details nearer the time. A winter education program is also being put together, details to follow soon.

Steve Beverly, Immingham Golf Club
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SOUTH EAST REGION - SURREY

Thursday, August 7. I should apologise for not participating in last month's magazine but I'm not going to. News was scarce, I had not been on holiday, no babies, no weddings, no golf tournaments and the only major forthcoming events were my Ruby anniversary on July 13 and my birthday on August 2. Not wanting to bore you with the details I will only say that I have never looked so dashing and my wife so lovely, that is of course if you forget about our wedding day back in 1968. I can still remember...

The match against the members of Wimbledon Common GC on July 18 was postponed so some of the selected team were invited by Gavin Kyle to play his course at Knole Park - Just two nights before I had accidentally kicked the leg of my bed while returning from the privy. The air was as blue as my left foot was going to look in the morning and it was still very sore when we teed off two days later at Knole Park.

Being made of true British grit I said nothing and kept my pain to myself. Ron Christie and Tony Bremer, my playing partners, knew nothing of my suffering until I was trying to negotiate my trolley around an ant hill, I kicked the said hill with my injured foot and fell head over heels with a heart rending "Agh!" and landed on my back with feet and legs in the air. My playing companions, with much compassion, only fell about laughing when I got to my feet unaided and declared that I had no broken bones. I hobbled the rest of the course with only my wonderful birdie on hole 3 as compensation.

You will be pleased to know that my foot is much better and ready for the challenge of Sunningdale GC on September 1 and Richmond GC on Sept 18.

You will remember the lost father in July's edition and may be wondering what happened. Well Paul Robinson has laid claim to baby James Owen and I am pleased to report that father, son and mother, Gemma, are all very well.

Graeme Roberts, son of Gareth, at present working in America has been nominated as a finalist in Toro's Student Greenkeeper of the Year competition. Well done Graeme and the best of luck. Mark Pennel, Drift GC, was the first to text a new pitch mark repairer and was much impressed as was his 18th green. Matt Lawrence, Guildford GC, is expecting a second addition to his family at the end of August and exclusive details will appear here when the time comes. As you can assume from this month's 'news' I am desperate and will write about almost anything including in-growing toenails, your favourite hairdresser and even your first night at the line-dancing club.

Brian Willmott