



I would like to start by saying a belated Happy New Year and all the best for our course for the 2009 season. Let's have at least a summer with sunshine so we can show off our courses again.

On Tuesday, December 9, 18 Section members paid a visit to Kingsfield Golf Centre near Linlithgow. We were met by Head Greenkeeper, Lee Fraser, and his Deputy, Barrie Lewis, who showed us around the course and the facilities. All in attendance enjoyed the day and we thank them both, along with the owner, Robert Arkley, and wish them every success for the future.

The Section winners of the Patrons Awards were Adam Sherwood, Deputy Head at Glencorse, and Joe Robertson, Assistant at Ratho Park. I hope they both enjoyed their prize of a trip to Harrogate Week. Hopefully they will provide me with some information from their visit for next month's Section news.

All members should have received, during the month of December, the information on our next site visit to Heartland's new 36 hole project on February 17, sponsored by Henderson's Grass Machinery.

If you are not receiving any mail please contact us, if we don't have your email or address we can't send you the information.

Members can check what's scheduled for the 2009 diary on the 'Region & Section pages' on the BIGGA website.

And finally if you have any news that you think might be of interest that we can put in our Section news please contact me.

Tom Murray
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NORTH

By the time you read this, the infamous 'Harrogate Week' will have taken place. I hope you all enjoyed the show - for those of you that made the trip down. It's a good opportunity to catch all the latest machinery and golf course products. It is also a good time to catch up with all your old muckers and put the greenkeeping world to rights - for those of you that have never been, if you get the chance then go, I recommend it. And for those of you that met in with Messrs Geddes, McClatchie and Robertson...Unlucky!

A couple of months ago I asked if any of you had some stories regarding your Christmas night out. Well one such story has come to my attention. During the Summer, the lads at Meldrum House Golf Club brought up the subject of 'The Christmas Night Out'. There was a throw away comment made, of it being a fancy dress night. One such lad, Jamie Robertson, took

this a little too far. Not knowing it was all one big joke, he set his sights on the perfect fancy dress. With his bosses, Kenny Harper and Richard Mullen winding him right up for the rest of the year, the lad was more determined than ever. Kenny said he wasn't to be beaten as he had won it last year. When the night finally came round, they were to meet in the clubhouse. All the lads were there and in walked Jamie, dressed as Old Tom Morris. He had been especially to the Edinburgh Woolen Mill to get all the required attire. To his horror he had been set up. In full rig out of plus fours, tweed shirt and hat, he looked out of place. Hopefully we'll get his picture posted on the Section website for all to see. Well done Jamie for being a good sport and thanks to anon for the information.

Staying with Meldrum House, congratulations go to Andy Smith and his girlfriend, Michelle, on the safe arrival of baby number three, a baby boy. Well done.

The annual BIGGA Scottish Region Conference takes place at Carnegie College, Dunfermline on Tuesday, March 3. It is very well attended and the North Section usually have quite a few members go down. For more information please contact Peter Boyd on: 07776242120.

Just a short Section news this month, hopefully with you guys returning from Harrogate you can share a few stories and your experiences of your trip.

Ben Brookes
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07813889374



NORTHERN REGION - NORTH WEST

I mentioned in last month's Section notes that we had a few new faces on the Committee and had a good AGM. One of the ideas that came from the meeting was to have course walks - many of our members who don't play golf can then come along. A suggestion was made that we combine the two and some members play golf while the rest go on a course walk, and then all sit down to a meal afterwards. Another idea was to have our own website. As I said there were some good ideas raised and the committee is working on these now. If you have any other ideas how we can move the Section forward please contact myself or any of the Committee.

The Bert Cross Memorial Trophy has been re-arranged for Thursday, February 26, at Wilmslow Golf Club. Many thanks to Steve Oultram and the Captain and Committee at Wilmslow for their continued support. The golf will be followed by a meal and presentation, while the trophy has been kindly sponsored by Richard Campey Ltd and will be played for every year.

We are limited on numbers so please book early. Billy Merritt is the man



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to book with and he can be found at: The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Billy can be contacted on mobile number: 07985175825.

Please send a cheque payable to BIGGA North West Section to the value of £20, if you want to enter. I can be contacted on: 01512894625 or my email is: jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Sheehan



CLEVELAND

Hello everyone, may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year and hopefully you all had a good Christmas, and Santa brought you everything you wished for. Apologies if this seems a little late but I missed the deadline for January's magazine.

Firstly, on behalf of the Cleveland Section I would like to thank Terry Charlton for all his hard work with the newsletter over the past few years. Terry is still heavily involved and continues to support the Cleveland Section, but he has handed me the job of writing the newsletter so he can free up some time, which I am sure you will all agree he deserves.

Firstly, back in November, the EGU and STRI, sponsored by John Deere, had a seminar day at Cleveland Golf Club. The day ran very well and there were a number of interesting topics covered. Henry Bechelet, from the STRI, talked about the "disturbance theory" and there was also a talk on wildlife. The weather was fairly kind to us and in the afternoon we went out onto the course and John Deere demonstrated some of their new equipment including the new electric greens mower. Henry also led us onto the greens at Cleveland to highlight the different grass species and to go over the work being carried out by Ian Pemberton, the Course Manager, and his staff. I must say that the greens were in fantastic condition, and as Nick Park, from the EGU, later said, "They were some of the best greens he had seen in the UK and Ireland all year". The wildlife talk was also very informative, looking at wetland areas on the course and some of the native grass found on the dunes.

The Cleveland Section AGM was also held in November at Teesside Golf Club. Thanks to those who turned up to support the Section. We were supposed to be having a talk by David Snowdon on the use of wetting agents. Unfortunately, due to health reasons, David was unable to attend but he will be giving this talk at a later date so I will keep you informed.

The night was not wasted though because kindly with only a few hours notice, Tony Mears delivered an excellent presentation and talk on the in-house construction work he and his staff have been carrying out rebuilding greens to USGA specification over the past 10 years at Dinsdale. The presentation was excellent and I am sure everyone found it very informative.

After the success of last year's Christmas Bring a Bottle and a round of golf at Cleveland, Ian Pemberton invited us all, on December 6, to do it all again. It was a great day for golf, and we were blessed with sun and clear skies. The course was presented immaculately and I am sure you will all agree that the greens were in superb condition yet again. It was hard to believe that it was December with the greens as fast and true as they were. Thanks to Ian and his staff, and to Cleveland Golf Club for the use of the course and the lovely meal. The day was well attended with everyone bringing a wrapped up bottle of some kind so no one went home empty handed.

The results are as follows: 1. D. Cuthbertson, D. Simpson, P. Hipkiss, 85pts; 2. P. Graham, I. Pemberton, A. Whitby, Ollie, 78pts; 3. R.Hood, I.Stuart, John, 76pts; 4. Barry walker and his team, 74pts; 5. R. Hancock and his team, 70pts; 6. I. Holoran and his team, 68pts; 7. M.Woods and his team, 65pts. Sorry for not naming individuals, there were no second names on the scorecards.

Thanks to Pete Marshall, from Tacit, for providing the bottles of wine for the prizes. Terry Charlton was holding his annual quiz on the same night - unfortunately I did not attend but I am sure, as always it was a great night. Future quizzes:

Tuesday, February 24, at Teesside Golf Club - Baz Walker is hosting his annual quiz, commencing at 7.30pm. This is a great night and the food is tip-top. Please come along and test your knowledge against your peers.

Tuesday, March 10, again commencing at 7.30pm, David Snowdon is returning to inform us about wetting agents and penetrants. Come along and find out about these materials and the differences between them.

The Spring Tournament will be held at Blackwell Grange Golf Club, at Darlington. Date and tee times are still to be sorted out. Terry Harrison, the Head Greenkeeper, has guaranteed it will not rain this time! We are looking for a venue to host next year's Autumn Tournament, so if there is anyone who can accommodate, could you please contact Ian Pemberton on: 07791695768.

Any news, please contact me on: 07921817857
or email: kevscarce@aol.com

Bye for now
Kevin Scarce



NORTH WALES

I'm afraid it's only going to be a short column this month (thank God for that I hear you cry!) I haven't really got much news but if you have any news or views you would like to pass on, get in touch with me or any committee



member and we'll do the rest.

I hope you enjoyed Harrogate if you went and if you didn't go that's a shame, there's usually a laugh to be had and you always seem to bump into people there you rarely see the rest of the year.

Your 2009 fixture list and competition form will be falling through your letter boxes soon remember to keep your entry forms safe as they cover all your competitions for the year - the first being May 20, at Rhyl Golf Club. This one interests me, as I've never been there before but more on that closer to the competition day.

That's about all for now told you it was going to be a short one! All the best until next month.

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MIDLAND REGION - EAST OF ENGLAND

Hello again. As this will be being read in a post Harrogate Week haze, I will keep things brief.

Back to work again after Christmas is always one of those depressing times, now the build up to, and all the excesses of the past few weeks have been and gone. The new calendars go up and you have to look at the left hand side and survey the year to come. To keep ourselves busy during this week we decided to borrow a chainsaw and operator and proceeded to remove the bottom five foot from every conifer on the course. It is amazing how three days work can completely transform the look of the place.

2009 won't be an easy year for anybody, just time to batten down the hatches and get through the year with as few problems as possible. Mind you I am getting fed up of continually hearing about all the doom and gloom around at the moment.

On a positive note the beginning of the year is the chance to also look forward to the coming season ahead and put into motion all those plans to make the course the best yet - and Harrogate is just around the corner.

Hopefully this year's show all went to plan, the lack of the big machinery manufacturers in the halls will undoubtedly have had an effect. However, hopefully everyone turned up as per usual to learn something, see something,

buy something, meet up with old friends, make new ones and generally stick two fingers up to the credit crunch!

One date to note is our Spring Seminar which will be held on Wednesday, February 18, at Newark Golf Club. Final details are still being drawn up as I write, however the format and speakers are roughly as follows 9am start - Neil Pettican and Jane Leyland, of Barenbrug, will talk about the journey of grass seed from grass plant, through harvesting, breeding and into the bag. Henry Bechelet and Andrew Cole, from the STRI, will then conduct a course walk around Newark Golf Club and talk on a variety of topics.

The day should be very interesting and everyone will receive final details by letter soon - Graham, don't worry they are not going to pick holes in your wonderful golf course. Ha ha!

On a final note, belated congratulations to Brian Robinson on his achievements at last year's National Championship, sponsored by Kubota.

Many thanks
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SOUTH EAST REGION - SURREY

Tuesday, January 6. A Happy 'belated' New Year my readers. Did you have a Merry Christmas? I did, and as none of you have given any news to me to write about I'm afraid it's time, once again, to keep you abreast of my Christmas break.

The Isle of Wight, if not a tropical paradise, was at least three degrees warmer than the mainland and the annual Ventnor Boxing Day swim was the event I was really looking forward to.

Although the water was very cold the sun was shining and the sea looked quite inviting. As noon approached all of us on the beach, and those viewing from the promenade joined in the countdown before those participating rushed into the dashing waves.

Did I feel cold? I was a little chilly, but with many layers of warm clothes and my woolly hat I watched from a safe distance as those mad fools entered the English Channel. Maybe next year!

The Turkey Trot took place at Betchworth Park Golf Club, on December 11, and it was too late to put the details in January's edition. For those who have not visited Surrey's website (www.surrey-bigga.co.uk) the result was a



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win for team Guildford - Matt Lawrence, Kevin Boxall and James Lowe. Second place was team Tacit with yours truly, Mark Harvey and Paul Weston.

The AGM followed and the current Committee was elected. Views were exchanged with regard to BIGGA membership being open to other employees in the fine turf industry. This subject will be debated during 2009 as yet no decision has been made either way. For details of a BIGGA survey regarding this see the Surrey website.

My email for your exciting information for these monthly Section notes is: brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk but please no holiday stories as I have quite enough of my own.

Brian Willmott



KENT

Hi all. I hope by the time you are reading this report that the weather has warmed up a bit! At the moment I am looking across the frozen tundra that used to be my golf course, half expecting Eskimos to start drilling holes in the lakes and try their luck at fishing!

Our golfers have proved themselves to be a hardy bunch, however, still going out and braving the harshest winter for years in pursuit of the perfect game. Rather than me is all I can say!

Well by the time March 19 comes around for our first outing of the year, at Walmer and Kingsdown on the east coast of our county, we may need to blow the cobwebs off the clubs which most of us would have put into hibernation but at least it's something to look forward to!

Please remember to confirm your place either by calling me or Kev, or by sending in an entry form from the website. I hope as many of you as possible are able to join us at our events this year, we do try to make them fun.

Lastly, many thanks to our sponsors who are supporting us this year. Their input ensures that we can offer some top venues at reasonable rates to you.

See you on the links next month!
Best of British
Rob Holland
kentgreenkeepers.co.uk

Section Notes -
Can all notes be emailed to: melissa@bigga.co.uk
by the 5th of the month prior to publication please.
Suggested word guide: 500



EAST ANGLIA

Hope you are all well and came through the festivities and sales unscathed and not too skint!

Are you all looking forward to the new committee? - Spending the next three months at least convincing them that you do know what you're doing after all, happy days. I digress, but ours must be the only profession where amateurs often have the last say.

Way back in December our ever increasing band of brothers (no Clare this year) paid homage to Thorpeness and our spiritual leader, Ian Willett, for the umpteenth turkey trot sponsored by CMW and the ageless Mike Moss. A total of 26 teams plotted their way round an excellent course, expertly prepared by Ian and his team.

We all made it round in four and a half hours. The starting flares did not launch the Southwold lifeboat, but three pheasants fell from the sky with suspected heart attacks.

After the golf (I use the term loosely) we all proceeded to the Country Club for the AGM, the meal and the prize giving.

The AGM went like a mercurial clock. The Chairman's report was discussed at short length. We have a healthy budget, largely due to Ian's tireless efforts. Clive Osgood brought us up to speed with BIGGA goings on. The fixtures for next year are all sorted thanks to Colin Rushbrook. The committee was all re-elected. The whole thing lasted 20 minutes and that included the National Anthem. I'd better list the committee for those of you who don't know, weren't there, or both. They are as follows: President: Colin Rushbrook, Vice President: Bob Chesham, Chairman: Steve Millard, Secretary: Ian Willett, Treasurer: Martin Mison, Scribe: Mick Lathrope, Committee: Mark Broughton, Roger Plummer, David Childs and Mark Henderson.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, or Country Club, prizes needed to be distributed among the worthy. Step up Mr Tim Rowan Robinson, Managing Director of Thorpeness, to present the silverware and Christmas puddings.

The first team was Mike Virley and his crew with 56.3pts; 2. Royals (Roger and all) 56.5pts; 3. Norfolk & Good, Eddie Jack, Robert Ransome and Co; 4. Purdis A team, Norman Fenwick & Co; Longest drive at the first was Robert Ransome; Longest drive at the 4th was "Zippy". There were several Nearest the Pins: 16th Michael Buck, 10th Michael Buck, 2nd Keith Titchell, 7th John Howard, 6th in two Robin Brooks. Nearest the white line - D. Harkness. The President's prize went to Ben Norris for Services to Greenkeeping.

As Ian's voice was beginning to fade, a microphone appeared as if by magic. It had been there all the time, but nobody had told Ian.



As always we must not forget our trade members without whose support we would not be as strong as we are and they should all be on our list of contacts whenever we need something. They are: CMW – main sponsor for the day, Aitkens, Ben Burgess, Tomlinson, John Deere, Textron, Jacobsen, Toro, Bartram Mowers, Hayter, SISIS, Rigby Taylor, Collier, Tacit and Vitax.

2009 fixtures are penciled in as Rookery Park, Newmarket, Felixstowe and Thetford.

Our thanks once again to Thorpeness Golf Club for putting up with us and making us welcome. The food and hospitality was first class - thank you.

We are probably the largest and best run Section of BIGGA - be proud.

Mick Lathrope



ESSEX

By the time this is printed another Harrogate Week will have passed and the winter we hope will fast be drawing to a close. Plans for the coming season should be well under way and your members will be looking forward to the warmer weather and better playing conditions.

Our first event of the year is due later this month; we are running a Seminar for the Essex Section at Stock Brook, The Country Club, on Wednesday, February 25, at 8.30am until 12.30pm. Speakers for this early morning meeting will be: Ian Sommerville - The Importance of Seaweed in the Soil Medium.

Richard Parmee – Colne Valley River Project: Conservation, A Little goes a Long Way. Ben Taylor – Bernhard & Company: The Importance of Grinding.

A light snack will be provided during the morning, this event is free to Essex Section Members.

Non-section members are welcome, so if you would like to come, please call Paul O’Kane on: 07738717870 or email: greenkeeperpaul@yahoo.co.uk to book your place, a small charge will be made to non-members. Also if you have any queries or need any more information please call or email Paul.

By now our new look website should be up and running, I have made some changes and will also be including a blog page and contact and suggestion pages. Your comments will be appreciated.

Any information for this inclusion on this page or on our website should be sent to me at: essexbigga@talktalk.net or on: 07764862337.

Arnold Phipps-Jones
Press Officer



SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES REGION - SOUTH WEST

Congratulations to everyone who turned out to make the Christmas event at Weston such a success. It was marvellous to see over 40 competitors and over 50 for the meal afterwards. A huge thank you to Weston Super Mare Golf Club for a very warm welcome and the hospitality afforded to us all day. Particular thanks to John Whitewood, Club Captain, for his participation and presenting the prizes. Luckily, his system of penalties for charity (a 50p fine for failure to fill divots, repair pitchmarks, or rake bunkers) wasn’t applied to us, although me accidentally parking in his car slot must have come pretty close! Many congratulations to Simon, KC, and the rest of the team for preparing such a great golf course – I hadn’t played Weston for a number of years, but it was in great condition – particularly for the time of year.

The Competition fittingly was won by Simon Cresser with 42 points, closely followed in by Darren Moxham with 39, and John Keenaghan with 38.

A great meal and then – The Raffle – how does he do it? There were two trestle tables groaning under the weight of prizes, and then there was Nobby (who was clearly a Town Crier in a former life) – he has one of those specially trained voices, (only in his case it must have escaped and gone back to the wild!) Thanks Nobby, from us all in the Section, for all you put into this day, and for all you do generally.

Simon Broome, from Lyme Regis Golf Club, won the sponsored place on the Regional trip to Harrogate Week. Simon is 21 and wrote that he wants to use the experience to meet more people within the industry, and to help his studies in NVQ 3. Well done Simon, and we look forward to meeting you. Thanks to our Patronage Partners – Avoncrop, Rigby Taylor, Vitax, Ken White Signs, BS Mowers, Headland, Ecosol, Countrywide, Symbio and Irritech, for sponsoring this place for Simon. This is just what the Patronage money is ring-fenced for.

It is hoped that many of these companies will rejoin for 2009, despite the economic downturn.

By the time this hits the shelves Harrogate will be over and we’ll be starting to look forward to spring maintenance and the new season. This winter has been a series of extremes – the Cotswolds has had more snow and frost than the last five winters put together, with even the Minch Seniors Section calling it a day on more than one occasion. We even had five days on temporary greens which is the first time in over 10 years.

Hopefully things will have settled down by early Spring - speaking of which, I would just take this opportunity to remind you that there is a Section Seminar on March 5, on Waste Management with the STRI, and Energy Savings & Grants from the SWEA (Severn-Wye Energy Agency) – date,



Around the Green

venue and details will have been circulated – please support what should be an interesting and worthwhile afternoon.

Celtic Manor is already looking forward to the Ryder Cup 2010. This is in early October, and Jim McKenzie is inviting applications for a Greenkeeping Support Team, and has expressed a wish that local greenkeepers are given precedence. What an opportunity to get close to the action. Do get in touch with Jane Jones or myself for further details.

Finally, back at Minch we recently purchased a pond book for some hints about how best to install a little wildlife pond in a secluded area of the course. There was a good sized section on various methods of installation – digging, shaping, sculpting, and finally “Creating your pond with explosives”. I quote – “Explosives are sometimes said to be an option for creating ponds, but although apparently attractive, are rarely a sensible option”. (No kidding Sherlock) “Explosives cannot be used to create anything except quite small ponds, and you have little control of the detailed shaping”. The final minor drawback being - “Be aware there is a complete lack of control over where most of the dislodged material lands”. Imagine the panic on Ladies’ Medal day when the greenstaff suddenly appear, safety helmets on, running down the fairway and throw themselves into the nearest pot bunker hands over ears, “I say young man, what’s going on?” followed promptly by KABBOOOOMMMM! (Scant seconds before half the course disappears from sight in a blinding flash). Nah – let’s be sensible – it’ll never catch on - but if it does you didn’t read about it here.

Participation this year guys – talk to your mates, visit clubs where their staff aren’t as active, let’s move forwards together.

Finally thanks to so many of you who have taken the trouble to write following my appointment as National Vice Chairman 2009. I’m really looking forward to working within your Association, and helping us all to move forward.

Paul Worster.
paulw@mgcnew.co.uk



SOUTH COAST

First I have to apologise to you all for missing the last two months purely by missing the dates for sending in the report on time...my fault, no one else’s.

Ok, that over, may I wish you all a belated Happy New Year - at the time of writing this report we are all in the grip of a deep freeze. Frost greens in use all day, so of course we are indoors, decorating the reception area of my club! What do you all do in times like these.

Venues for this year: Spring - Parkstone, Summer - Hampworth Manor. The rest are still to be arranged. This year’s seminar is again at Canford Magna on March 25. Results from the Christmas Meeting at Barton on Sea: Mark Davis & Simon Justice were winners. The rest of the results will follow next month.

Our South Coast Section will be holding a seminar on Wednesday, February 25, at Canford Magna Golf Club. Speakers for the day will include: Robert Hogarth, Course Manager at Remedy Oak Golf Club; Tony Gadd, Course Manager at Barton-on-Sea Golf Club; Joe Crawley, of Vitax, and Gerry Byrne, Course Manager from the K Club. Gerry will be talking about the preparations for the Ryder Cup in 2006.

The cost of the day is £20 for members and £25 for non-members – this is also open to Club Secretary’s and Committee members. Please make cheques payable to: BIGGA South Coast and send them to: Chris Bitten, 166 Oak Tree Road, Bitterne Park, Southampton, Hampshire, SO18 1PA. If you have any other queries please contact him on: 07796887633 or email: chrisbitten@btinternet.com

If you have any news you would like to feature in ‘Around the Green’ then please tell me by email: chrismaggisturgess@tiscali.co.uk

Chris Sturgess



DEVON AND CORNWALL

Our Christmas meeting was held at Bude and North Cornwall Golf Club, on Tuesday, December 9, where the weather was kind enough, if a little breezy. Thank you to our sponsors for the day PJ Flegg and Irritech.

The format for our Christmas meetings is Greensomes and was won with some ‘local knowledge’ by Jason Chidley and Sam Wood, both from Bude, with an excellent 37pts, 2nd was Terry Clarke DHG, Downes Crediton and A. James HG Killiow, Park (slightly different to how he is usually named) so people won’t realise who he is! Also with 37pts losing on countback and 3rd Rich Parker HG, Ilfracombe GC, and Mark Tucker, Saunton GC, with 35pts. Nearest the Pin was won by Rich Parker and Adam Bridgewater again took the prize for Longest Drive - Well done to all! - Not forgetting Paul Watson MST for the ‘Cornish pasties’ at the ‘halfway house’.

A big thank you to Mark Campbell, Course Manager, and his team for their hospitality and use of their excellent course for the day! And to all the catering staff for the very enjoyable meal and the Christmas party games – especially the balloons! Many thanks also to the bar staff. Our after dinner entertainment was provided by

‘Tank Sherman’ who was as comical as ever! Thanks to him as always.



As is the custom at our Christmas do's, everybody bought a prize for the draw, so thanks to all for their efforts, especially John Palfrey, on behalf of Avoncrop, for the Christmas hamper and a special mention to Colin Webber, not only for his sterling efforts over these last 12 months, but also for the wonderful prize of a stereo!

As always if anybody has any stories or would like me to mention a particular event I can be reached at the number or email below.

Jerry Cole
07764224582
greenwaysjrc@aol.com



SOUTH WALES

Hello everyone/Sut mae! Hope you are all well. The winter series of evening lectures began at the end of January with Mike Garner, of Maxicrop, giving an excellent presentation on the role of natural plant extracts in turf nutrition. A big thank you to Mike for coming down to talk to us and also to Martin Townsend, of Countrywide, for once again sponsoring and organising the talks. Well done. Thanks to everyone who attended a most enjoyable evening. The dates for the remaining lectures are as follows:

Tuesday, February 10 - Tour of the new Parc Y Scarlets stadium, Llanelli (Home of the mighty Scarlets!) with Head Groundsman, Dean Gilasbey, followed by a presentation by Derek Smith of DLF Trifolium on grass seed germination - This is a 5.30 start.

March 10, Pencoed College - A presentation by Mark Hunt, of Headland Amenity, 7pm start.

Tuesday, April 14 - A presentation by Nick Gray, of Bathgate, on top dressings and root zones for sports pitches and golf courses. This will be held at Sophia Gardens. Further details of these talks will be posted on the BIGGA website.

Still on the education front, the Annual Avoncrop Education Seminar will again be held at Whitchurch Golf Club (recently voted 'Best Welsh Inland Golf Course' so well done Mike Stokes and the lads!) on Wednesday, February 25. The theme for this year is drainage and will include speakers representing a number of companies involved in the drainage of golf courses and sportsgrounds. This seminar is free and includes bacon rolls and coffee on arrival, and a buffet lunch. Please phone either myself or Avoncrop to reserve a place. Further details will again be posted on the BIGGA website.

Another big thank you goes out to Jonathan Harmer and Gerald Orme, from Farmura, for agreeing to sponsor the fixtures cards again this year, and I think I can speak ferrosol (sorry!) that your help is greatly appreciated by the Section.

I forgot to thank Steve Chappell for all his hard work during 2008 (his first year as Section Secretary) in my last 'Around the Green' so well done Steve!

Steve has requested that Section members email him at some point so that a database can be created with the purpose of being able to contact members electronically, thus saving on postage. His email address is: steve.chappell@talktalk.net

Finally, good luck to Wales in the Six Nations (and to Scotland - Ed), though I am worried that we are starting as favourites, which usually means we'll end up messing things up! First Scotland on the 8th, then England on St Valentines day (let's hope it's a massacre- them not us!) I may be a bit busy though as the current Mrs Richards is due to give birth to our third child on that day so let's hope they have a television in the delivery suite!

If you have any info for me to include in next months 'Around The Green' then please contact me on the number below.

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Section Notes -

Can all notes be emailed to: melissa@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of the month prior to publication please. Suggested word guide: 500

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BUYERS' GUIDE



AVOID SLIP UPS

No matter what kind of golf shoes you wear, there is the potential to slip. No shoe company is willing to give 100% guarantee that you will not slip anywhere on the golf course because there is such a wide variety of terrain and conditions.



Club committee members, course managers and green-keepers must take a close look at their golf course and implement appropriate safety precautions to avoid slip and fall accidents. Golf can be a dangerous sport, considering our litigious society and the fact that insurance rates have escalated, it is not surprising more golf clubs are now protecting against liability. The solicitor or claims handling company say that if you have had an accident and it was someone else's fault, you may be able to claim compensation.

All this can be avoided of course, why find fault when you can implement a lasting solution.

Paints, conveyor belting, timber grooving, and even chicken wire are still being used but they all wear out in no time and can be hazardous in themselves. That's why Gripclad have both an affordable and practical product that solves all these problems and there are many Golf Clubs throughout the UK who have installed these can testify to this fact. The product is resistant to spiked shoes, weather, frost, corrosion, chemicals, impact and of course, slip.

It can be fixed down onto wooden railway sleepers, club entrance steps, trolley ramps, bunker steps, viewing platforms, footbridges and walkways. It can also be fixed on to concrete and metal surfaces.

Gripclad offers free advice, product specification and a product that will far outlast all previous slip prevention methods.

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