

Return to Slender

Slender speedwell is the word, as Dr Terry Mabbett returns to front this month's L&D Feature

Brooklime is commonly found as a water margin plant around ponds and along brooks

There are over 20 different speedwells native or naturalised in the UK but slender speedwell (*Veronica filiformis*) is the only one found growing as a weed in well formed and tightly knit professional sports turf. Slender speedwell as the name suggests is one of the 'puniest' speedwells but more than makes up for lack of stature by being one of the 'worst' weeds in turf.

Slender speedwell along with field woodrush was given the dubious honour of being the most stubborn and difficult to manage weed of sports turf. Bayer Environmental Science conducted a survey by questionnaire at Saltex 2004 to find out which weeds were regarded as the most difficult to control. Slender speedwell came out top of for stubbornness with 33% of respondents identifying the weed as the most difficult to control on their 'patch'.

A well travelled weed

Veronica filiformis is a garden plant introduction that must have seemed like a good idea at the time

in the early 19th century. It was originally introduced from the Caucasus in 1808 as a 'Georgian rock gardener's delight' but subsequently found a more favourable and fruitful habitat in grassland. Slender speedwell was already well established as a garden plant in 1830 when the cylinder mower was invented. Eight years later saw first reports of slender speedwell escaping from rock gardens into the wider world of turf.

Turf was clearly 'on a roll' following invention of the cylinder mower by Edwin Budding and on sale two years later at Ransomes. The 'Collins Wild Flower Guide' describes slender speedwell with its pretty blue/mauve flowers as 'a worthy addition to our flora' but the green-keeper and groundsman would disagree seeing slender speedwell as a pernicious weed of fine turf.

Slender speedwell is not the sort of plant you notice unless you are really looking for it, especially in the cold light of January when plants make their first new-year appearance as a small 'dormant' matt growth with tiny leaves. In March they are on the move and by late April the slender stems are sliding

through the turf and bearing flowers.

Slender speedwell is certainly obscure compared with most other speedwells, especially the bushier and larger-leaved germander (birds-eye) speedwell. Germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*) and other species like thyme speedwell (*Veronica serpyllifolia*) are as nuisance weeds of turf, but generally amenity turf or recently seeded fine turf disappearing quickly once regular closer cut mowing begins.

But mowing has little effect on slender speedwell which sneaks through the turf at ground level via long, slender, creeping stems eventually consolidating into relatively large patches of stubborn weed growth. Slender speedwell is one of the most deceptively damaging of weeds of sports turf and mowing can actually make it worse.

A die-hard weed

There is no doubt that slender speedwell is one of the hardest weeds to control and along with Field Woodrush is the most resistant to selective herbicides in general used on managed turf. Unlike



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Slender speedwell in the cold light of January is a small and static matt of foliage



Slender speedwell on the move in March



Slender speedwell in late April with slender stems moving quickly through turf rooting as they go. Plants already in flower



Thyme speedwell in amenity turf



Germander (Bird's eye) speedwell in amenity turf



Close up on brooklime

Field Woodrush which is essentially confined to low fertility acid reaction soils, slender speedwell is not that fussy about soil conditions and tends to crop up anywhere and everywhere in turf.

Botanically speaking slender speedwell is a downy, low-growing and matt-forming perennial with small blunt-toothed, kidney shaped leaves carried on short stalks either in pairs or alternately. The mauve-blue flowers borne on long thread-like stalks are relatively large given the diminutive foliage and only appear within a relatively narrow 6-week window of flowering from late April to June.

In spite of its exotic plant status and original rock garden niche this fast spreading garden escape took to its 'new' turf home with relish and gusto, but not in every respect because *Veronica filiformis* rarely sets fruit or viable seed in the United Kingdom. Outside of the turf grass environment the weed is

or a completely different course in a contractor's mowing schedule.

If a student of botany were to research the historical development of slender speedwell as a turf weed they would almost certainly find it was closely tied to birth and growth of mowing including the spread of contract grass cutting services.

Few herbicides for control

Before reaching for the bottle [of herbicide] there are basic things to do that will help suppress and contain this pernicious weed. Always box clippings and destroy them if you think they contain pieces of slender speedwell. Try to avoid lending out or borrowing mowers and always clean machinery thoroughly before moving on to a new site. Slender speedwell can be checked by applications of lawn sand in spring, the iron (ferrous sulphate) component burning off the leaves but it will not kill the plants.

“If a student of botany were to research the historical development of slender speedwell as a turf weed they would almost certainly find it was closely tied to birth and growth of mowing including the spread of contract grass cutting services”

rather localised and found mainly by riverbanks, in churchyards and other damp places.

Sexual reproduction is clearly not the secret of slender speedwell's success in UK turf and unlike more widespread and highly fecund wayside weeds such as dandelion, clovers and plantains there is no seed bank outside. But every 'dog has its day', and slender speedwell is no exception. Plants have an ultra efficient means of asexual or vegetative reproduction unwittingly assisted by greenkeepers mowing without a box. This mode of spread in which pieces of slender speedwell stem 'hitch a ride' on mower blades has underpinned its success as a well-travelled turf weed.

The long, creeping prostrate stems root at regular intervals (the nodes) to produce new plants which collectively form a large matt of weed growth. Pieces of stem excised during mowing root readily where they fall. This can be on the same site or miles away, because pieces of stem become attached to the mower and are carried on to the next hole on the same course

When you finally go to use herbicide make sure you choose the right one because slender speedwell is notoriously resistant to many herbicides. There has always been a dearth of herbicide actives capable of killing this particular weed at standard label dosage rates and application frequencies. The target weed lists of most turf herbicides will contain notoriously difficult to control turf weeds like self-heal, yarrow and clovers but often make no mention of slender speedwell.

Look down the target weed 'hit list' for an unequivocal statement about control of slender speedwell. Make sure the label specifies slender speedwell as opposed to speedwells in general and beware of comments like 'moderate control only'. The 'old' auxin-type (hormonal) herbicides such as 2,4-D and MCPA will do little if anything against slender speedwell but there are newer actives with the same hormonal mode of action that will.

The one with the most proven pedigree is fluroxypyr and by looking for products which contain this herbicide active is probably the

best starting point for controlling slender speedwell. Virtually all products containing fluroxypyr will contain other actives as well. The will invariably have a completely different mode of action and may well augment control provided by fluroxypyr.

Spray timing against slender speedwell appears to be critical and is recommended within a relatively short window amounting to weeks. As an already difficult to control weed application too early in the year when the ground is still cold, and neither weeds nor grass is actively growing, is not advised. Applications made after slender speedwell's main flowering period in May are considered as too late.

Sorting out the speedwells

There are around two dozen speedwells in various environments across the UK but the speedwell situation for greenkeepers shouldn't be too difficult to sort out. All speedwell flowers have a common structure (short tube with four petal like lobes) and are all basically blue though with different shades and patterns. The botanist might be comfortable about differentiating species on exact flower size, structure and colour but others will clearly not. Moreover the greenkeeper may not see slender speedwell in flower, because although low cut mowing will not remove the weed it will almost certainly stop it from flowering in profusion.

A far better way to recognise slender speedwell in turf is by its slender creeping stems and distinctive leaf shape – kidney shaped when young and becoming more rounded with age. Indeed an alternative though much less frequently used common name for *Veronica filiformis* is 'round leaved speedwell'. German speedwell and thyme speedwell which are not uncommon in amenity turf are much more upright plants with flowers borne on spikes rather than single stalks.

The speedwell most frequently encountered in general is common field speedwell (*Veronica persica*) a lover of recently disturbed ground and almost certainly present in flower beds around the clubhouse. It may be accompanied by ivy speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia*), so called because of its ivy-like leaf shape. Of passing interest is 'brooklime' (*Veronica beccabunga*) very common in muddy areas around ponds and along brooks. The leaves were apparently used centuries ago as a cure for scurvy (Vitamin C deficiency).

James de Havilland takes a closer look at the intricacies of current machinery

The anatomy of...

British hand mowers

Hand mower choice may be wider than you think



The 'big three', John Deere, Ransomes Jacobsen and Toro, may be the key names associated with golf course mowing equipment, but these companies do not have it all their own way when it comes to all fine turf care.

Cricket wickets, lawn tennis and bowls, for example, are areas where smaller independent British mower makers Allett, Dennis and Lloyds continue to do extremely well.

But this is not to suggest British pedestrian mower makers do not have models suitable for 'hand mowing' golf greens and tees. And to suggest that Ransomes hand

mowers, such as the highly regarded Super Certes, will never compete with in-house siblings Jacobsen for some golf course duties would be misleading too. But it is fair to say the key US makers, with US made models, have fine tuned their pedestrian models specifically for the golf market.

British designed and built pedestrian mowers do of course retain a strong following. The ability of these mowers to produce the fine quality of cut demanded by bowls and cricket wickets proving the ability of these machines to deliver a good, consistent finish. What many in the golf sector may not have also

appreciated is how British made models have evolved. Lloyds may well still make a Paladin model but to suggest it is the same mower as the ones on sale in the 1960s is wide of the mark.

Allett and Dennis have made huge development changes too; current models have vastly improved ergonomics, vibration damping and ease of set up.

Here we take a brief overview of Allett, Dennis and Lloyds and the models that these companies suggest are well suited to producing a cut to meet the most exacting of standards to include greens mowing.

All electric power: The Allett ELMOW is due for release this autumn. Battery powered, the ELMOW shows how British mower manufactures are continuing to develop their machines.

Dennis Mowers, Ashbourne Road, Kirk Langley, Derbyshire DE6 4N
www.dennisuk.com

For many, it is the versatile Dennis FT510 'cassette' model that is the most recognisable Dennis model. The company does of course offer a far wider model choice, including its increasingly popular Razor models to include the Razor Ultra 560. Fitted with a 'loop' handle more familiar to many in the golf sector, the Razor Ultra is designed to suit greens and other fine turf mowing. Dennis has recently invested in new production facilities.

Dennis Razor Ultra 560

The Dennis Razor Ultra 560 has been purpose developed to meet the demands of golf greens and tees, cricket pitches and bowling greens. It features a 560mm (22") cutting width with an 11 bladed cutting cylinder, ultra short wheelbase for undulating surfaces, tungsten tipped groomer, click height adjusters and stub free transport wheels. Claimed to offer excellent balance and good manoeuvrability, the mower has a compact handle design and simple controls with durable acrylic guards.

Key Razor Ultra 560 specification details:

Cutting width: 560mm (22")
Cylinder: 11 blade
Height of cut: 1.6 – 15mm
Cut performance: 200 cuts/m
Dimensions (LxWxH): 910 x 823 x 1135mm
Weight (approx): 140kg
Engine: Honda GX120

Dennis Razor Ultra 560 features a short wheelbase and loop handle.

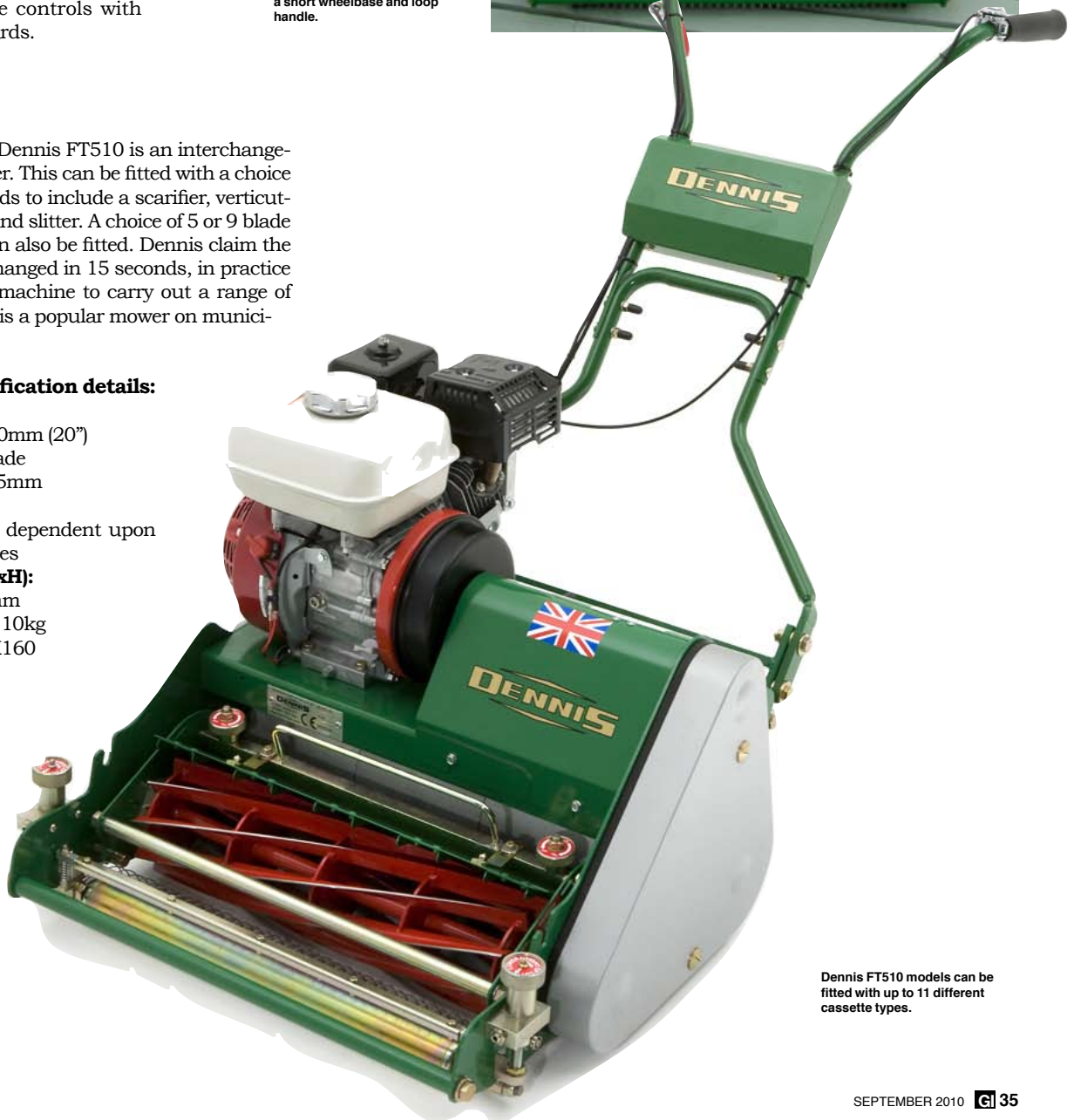


Dennis FT510

The established Dennis FT510 is an interchangeable cassette mower. This can be fitted with a choice of 11 different heads to include a scarifier, verticutter, brush, spiker and slitter. A choice of 5 or 9 blade cutter cassettes can also be fitted. Dennis claim the cassettes can be changed in 15 seconds, in practice this enabling one machine to carry out a range of duties. The FT510 is a popular mower on municipal golf courses.

Key FT510 specification details:

Cutting width: 510mm (20")
Cylinder: 5 or 9 blade
Height of cut: 2-25mm
Cut performance: up to 200 cuts/m dependent upon the number of blades
Dimensions (LxWxH): 1300 x 750 x 970mm
Weight (approx): 110kg
Engine: Honda GX160



Dennis FT510 models can be fitted with up to 11 different cassette types.

**Allett Mowers by Turfmech Machinery Ltd ,
Hangar 5, New Road, Hixon, Stafford ST18 0PJ
www.allett.co.uk**

Allett Mowers was acquired by Turfmech Machinery in 2007 with production moving to the company's Stafford factory. During the past three years, Turfmech

has retained the basic Allett mower design but developed production to make the mowers both easier to build and maintain. The key models that target the golf sector include the Tournament and Shaver, although the new ELMOW model, due for launch this autumn, is an interesting development. Based on the Tournament, the ELMOW should boast low noise and running costs.

Allett Shaver 20 and 24

Allett Shaver mowers have no groomer fitted but have space to accommodate a static brush. The front roller can be moved rearwards so it is closer to the rear roller on the Shaver - there's no groomer in the way- to better handle undulating turf and contours. The Shaver targets those who mow their greens regularly using a ride-on triple mower fitted with a groomer and use a hand mower solely ahead of competitions where a close strip final finish and appearance is paramount.

Key Allett Shaver 20 and 24 specification details:

- Cutting width:** 510mm (20") or 610mm (24")
- Cylinder:** 10 blade
- Height of cut:** 2.4 – 19mm
- Dimensions (LxH):** 1010 x 1280mm
- Cut performance:** 246 cuts/m
- Weight (approx):** 81.5 -92kg or 91.5 – 104kg
- Engine:** Honda GX120 (4hp) or GX160 (5.5hp)



Allett Tournament 20 and 24

Allett Tournament models have an integral groomer that can be raised out of work when not required. This model is otherwise the same as its non-Groomer Shaver alternative. Turfmech has made a number of detail changes to these models since taking over production, these ranging from improved roller bearings, improved vibration and noise control and the introduction of a quick height micro system that allows adjustment without tools.

Key Allett Tournament 20 and 24 specification details:

- Cutting width:** 510mm (20") or 610mm (24")
- Cylinder:** 10 blade
- Height of cut:** 2.4 – 19mm
- Dimensions (LxH):** 1010 x 1280mm
- Cut performance:** 246 cuts/m
- Weight (approx):** 81.5 -92kg or 91.5 – 104kg
- Engine:** Honda GX120 (4hp) or GX160 (5.5hp)



**Lloyds & Co. Letchworth Ltd, Birds Hill,
Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 1JE
www.lloydsandco.com**

The Paladin mower comes in three varieties, the Paladin, Paladin Dual and the Paladin TG and two widths of 21" (533mm) and 24" (610mm). The mowers are all fine turf models, suitable for cutting bowling greens, tennis courts, cricket squares and golf putting greens. Lloyds suggest the independent clutches of the Paladin models

transmission is unique system and prevents the mower from the snatching on take off. All models are constructed from high-grade aluminium castings with a rotationally moulded grassbox with lifting handles for ease of use; this helps make them one of the lightest machines on the market. Height adjustment is via a single adjuster with additional alignment compensation. Dual and TG models target those seeking the highest quality of cut and are the units most suited to mowing golf greens.



Paladin Dual

The Lloyds Paladin Dual is developed from the Lloyds Paladin TG without the groomer being fitted. The front grooved roller can be located closely back to the cutting cylinder thus ensuring the shortest roller distance to follow the tight contours of the golf greens.

Key Paladin Dual specification details:

- Cutting width:** 533mm (21") & 610mm (24")
- Cylinder:** 5,9 or 11 blade
- Height of cut:** 1-25mm
- Cut performance:** up to 225 cuts/m dependent upon the number of blades
- Weight (approx):** 76 to 80kg
- Engine:** Honda GX120

Paladin TG

The Lloyds Paladin TG has a groomer fitted closely between the cutting cylinder and the grooved front roller. The groomer aids healthy growth by removing the lateral grasses and other debris to aid the playability of the surface. The groomer can be engaged or disengaged via a simple clutch arrangement. All Paladin models are designed to allow the cutting cylinder to be removed quickly and easily for maintenance.

Key Paladin TG specification details:

- Cutting width:** 533mm (21") & 610mm (24")
- Cylinder:** 11 blade
- Height of cut:** 1-25mm
- Cut performance:** up to 225 cuts/m
- Weight (approx):** 82 to 88kg
- Engine:** Honda GX120



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partners in turfcare

DEALER OF THE MONTH

A new series aimed at celebrating the great work done by dealerships up and down the country

TED HOPKINS LTD / TRACTOR HIRE LTD

Location and Size

Newport & Brecon covering Mid, West & South Wales, plus Midlands & South West England for Club Car.

Employees and size of Premises

24 employees. Newport has a three acre site and Brecon has a one acre site.

Number of service vans

Seven

Brief History of Company

Ted Hopkins Ltd is a family run business established since 1987 and having been involved in the agricultural and horticultural machinery business since 1954 Ted Hopkins took the opportunity in 1987 to start his own business specialising in the sales and servicing of groundcare machinery from a small workshop and parts facility at St. Brides Wentloog near Newport. This site has grown and now includes six acres of grass for testing and demonstrating machines.

The business grew in the 90's and a second depot was built on a greenfield site at Brecon. Again including storage, workshops and a larger retail shop on a one acre site.

In 2008 an additional storage building was purchased in Brecon as the depot expanded.

In 2008 a new storage and building was built in Newport to assemble the equipment required for the Ryder Cup in 2010.

Over the last five years we have expanded our hire fleet of equipment, this is mainly utility vehicles and golf buggies which are offered on long term contracts to customers in Wales, Midlands, through to Hampshire and all of the South West.

In 2010 we added two new trucks for the transportation of golf buggies for the European Tour to cover all major golf tournaments.



Ted Hopkins is still involved in the business on a daily basis, he will turn 80 next February and is supported by his son and two grandsons.

Key services offered

Sales, service, parts, long and short term spot hire of groundcare equipment including tractors up to 120hp on turf tyres, and implements and a full range of utility vehicles including golf buggies.

How has the dealership changed over the years?

Initially, we started selling horticultural machinery locally, from one depot then decided to concentrate on the commercial groundcare equipment, together with utility vehicles and golf buggies from our Newport depot.

Realised in the late 90's we needed to concentrate our agricultural business in Mid Wales and built a new depot in Brecon.

There's been a demand in the last five years for contract hire to include servicing.

What would you like to see changed?

Long term contracts from manufacturers - who expect the dealer

network to invest in training, tooling, parts and stock equipment - with buy backs built into contracts if the manufacturer terminates the franchise agreement.

How do you work with your customers?

A number of customers work closely with us, with their own in house service facility carrying out routine servicing with our staff carrying out the major repairs.

We operate our own transport which includes two 38 tonne tractor units with a range of trailers and one 7.5 tonne beaver tail lorry for delivery and collections, together with a number of 4wd pickup trucks with trailers.

Major customers

Celtic Manor; Ryder Cup Wales; European Tour.

Franchises

- Amazone; Blec; Bomford; Club Car; Dennis; Deutz; Hardi; Kawasaki; Kubota; McConnel; Merlo; Stihl; Toro;

and many more too numerous to mention

Section Notes

Please email your notes to
scott@bigga.co.uk
by the 5th
of the month

All the latest news from your Section

Around The Green



Scottish Region



Ayrshire

Hello there!

I've finally landed back on my feet after being blown around daft at St Andrews.... What was all the fuss about? 40 mile an hour winds I guess! I could hardly stand on my own two feet and that was me using the bunker rake to hold me up!

Hats off to the players who had to suffer not only the strong winds on the Friday but the heavy showers of rain that visited every few hours. Just goes to show how well Louis Oosthuizen actually played over the whole week. He even managed to smile through every round..... I'm going to try that method, see if it helps my game.

Anyway I thoroughly enjoyed my involvement in the Open Support team. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Scott MacCallum and Rachael Duffy, of BIGGA, for the efforts that they both put in, not only during the week of The Open but long into the night organising us greenkeepers to be in certain places at certain times.

Thank you to you both and the other BIGGA representatives. Also a big thanks to the 52 greenkeepers involved, spirits were high throughout the Championship and a great week was had by all! Can't wait to do it all again in the future.

A congratulations is due to George Morrison and his partner, Maggie, on the arrival of their bouncing baby boy, Rory. Good wishes to the three of you from all in the Section.

Finally, we have a retirement in the Section this month, Robin McMillan, of Moffat Golf Club. Robin has been with Moffat

since 1974 and has clocked up some well earned miles over his tenure, Plenty time on your hands now, Robin, I personally think he won't be able to stay away! Robin handed the reigns over to Mike Wilson at the end of August. From all of us in the Section we wish you well in your retirement and good luck to Mike on his new appointment.

Remember guys get in touch with any news!

'til next time.

John Mair 07500874449

johnmair982@hotmail.co.uk



Central

This year's Autumn outing will take place at Downfield GC on Thursday Sept 23. Entry forms should be with you shortly if you don't already them. We hope for a good turnout over what is a great course.

Course Manager, Paul Murphy, has indicated that he may even cut the greens for this special occasion but stopped short of a definite promise.

At the Section AGM, which is scheduled to be held at Elmwood in the last few days in October, we will be looking for a new Secretary/ Treasurer.

As you will be aware Andy Mellon gave up this position when he was elected National Vice-Chairman.

George Pendrich, who stood in temporarily has decided that his commitments to other matters means he cannot give it the attention the job deserves so any keen members out there please get in touch with someone on the committee.

Likewise, if there is anything a member would like us to consider staging as an educational event then please contact us.

Gordon Moir



West

Autumn has arrived and here we are preparing to core greens and verti-drain a variety of surfaces assuming we can take the machines around the course without sinking, what a difference to a couple of months ago when nothing would grow because of the dry conditions.

I hope all of you have had a good season and are looking forward to the course alterations scheduled with an abundance of enthusiasm and new lively spring in your step.

Only a couple of items to mention as very little seems to be happening, as usual not a soul has been on touch, but maybe that could change or people are just too busy.

The AGM due in October has still to be confirmed for the venue but will be along similar lines to previous years with a couple of speakers, some suggestions would be good if possible.

The annual dinner in November looks to be back to Victoria's but committee have still to confirm this as numbers last year were a bit disappointing.

The outing at Helensburgh Golf Club on September 2 will be reported on in the next issue.

Please remember gents to get in touch at stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com or on 0141-942-5554, or on mobile 07790823914.

Nice to see the Association recognised Cecil George for all his efforts over the years in relation to education and service to the West Section and before that SIGGA. It was a lovely article on a dedicated greenkeeper. Best wishes from the Section, Cecil.

Last, but not least, I would express our sadness at the passing of Gordon Howat's

mother during the summer. Our thoughts are with you at this difficult time.



North

I start again with another apology, communications or wires seemed to be crossed again. I sent the notes in again on time but it coincided with The Open and they seemed to have got lost along the way.

Editor's Note. Please accept my apologies for the omission of the North Notes for August. There was a communication/administration hiccup at our end. S Mac

The Scottish National Tournament was held back in June at Murcar Links. I must admit we were blessed with good weather on the day. The North Section were narrowly beaten by the Central Section on the four best nett scores. Richard Pirie, from Newmachar GC, won his section as did Derek Green, from Royal Aberdeen. I was lucky enough to win the best Nett score of the day and therefore collected the Friendship Trophy. I have now qualified for the National Championship, sponsored by Kubota and Charterhouse, down at The Berkshire Golf Club just outside London, along with David Simpson, of Crieff GC, who won the scratch competition.

The course on the day was in very good condition and that is all down to Brian Anderson and his staff at Murcar. Did you say that I could go down to the British, Brian? Murcar was immense!

A big thank you on behalf of the North Section goes to the Scottish Administrator, Peter Boyd who had organised the whole day, without him the event would never have hap-

pened. He was ably assisted by the one, the only, some people say thank goodness (or words to that effect), Neil Mitchell from Greentech. A thank you to all the trade who donated raffle prizes on the day. Without you guys the outings would not be possible either.

Just down the road from Murcar, a certain new golfing development is finally getting under way. Full planning permission for the course and driving range at Trump International Links has now been granted. At last some ground work can begin in earnest.

The North Section would like to wish Paul O'Connor and SOL Golf Construction Ltd all the best over the coming months and hopefully there are not too many sticking points.

Dale Robertson will have sent the forms out for the Autumn outing at Huntly GC. He asks that if you do intend going that you get the forms back to him as soon as possible and then hopefully we can get a great turn out just like we did at Deeside back in May. Ross assures me that the course will be in tip top condition!

Brian Hunter, from McDonald Golf Club in Ellon, has returned from his weary duties down at The Open. I don't know if many of you were watching the coverage on the TV during Saturday's play but he was lucky enough to get Henrik Stenson and Trevor Immelman. When they reached the 17th Road hole, one of the players landed in the famous Road Hole bunker and as you are probably aware there is a camera in it. Well when it came to raking the bunker the camera shot to him and Peter Alliss started talking about the BIGGA Support Team and how well they had been working. Brian finished raking the bunker then sat down on the edge of it. Peter Alliss then said something along the lines of, "It looks as though he's had enough!" when in fact he was actually ducking down out the way so he wasn't in the line of sight of the players.

He was very fortunate too on the Sunday as he had the final group on the last day. Knowing him I could imagine him beaming with pride walking up the 18th with the crowd behind him. He was quite emotional when he found out he had the last group, so much so that he actually kissed the Editor, Scott

MacCallum. Never mind Brian! He would like to thank BIGGA for the opportunity of working with the Support team and that he had the time of his life despite being out on the course on the Friday for a round lasting just over eight hours!

One other bit of news this month is that Euan Rankin, from Murcar Links, left us last month. He has gone back to working along side his father at Fyvie Golf Club. Good luck Euan in this new venture for you and despite what Brian says you will be missed.

I did say I was clutching at straws for news this month, so I do apologise again. It is hard to get stories throughout the summer months so I do have to waffle on a bit! If you do have any news no matter how big or small then give me a shout on 07813889374 or on tinternet benbrookes@yahoo.co.uk. Happy Greenkeeping.

Ben Brookes
Murcar Links

Northern Region



Northern

Hello everyone, hope you are all enjoying the summer. With this warm wet weather at the moment, the grass seems to be growing faster than we can cut it. On June 14 at the annual Northern v Sheffield match, we managed to retain the trophy by drawing the match 3-3. The Section would like to thank Woolley Park GC. for hosting the match, and Rigby Taylors for sponsoring it. The weather for the early starters was good, but with a late thunder storm it was difficult for the last few games to finish. One item of news, the Section would like to congratulate Phil Rowbottam, from Woolley Park, on his selection to the England clay pigeon shooting team, and managing to win a team gold medal. The next Section event is the Autumn Tournament plus A.G.M. on September 29, to be held at Bradford GC. First tee 10am. I will be on holiday the week before the event, so please contact me early, or contact J.Watts on 07720294031 to book your place. As usual please contact me at 72 West

Park Grove Roundhay, LS8 2DY. 07947401278. E mail frankstewart3@hotmail.co.uk.

Frank Stewart



North East

Hello everyone. It's that time of the month again unfortunately not a lot of news to talk about, only my holidays which I have always threatened to write about should I not receive any news. Well I popped over to Spain with my family, but before that I had decided to get in touch with Wendy O'Brien, Superintendent at one of those Polaris World courses to ask if she could show us around her course, Wendy previously worked at Carden Park before moving to Spain..

My son, Steven, and I certainly got our eyes opened, especially at the size of the bunkers. Can you believe the total yardage of bunkers covered eight hectares? Some were the total length of the hole and, of course, plenty of water to go with it?

Anyway, anybody thinking of moving over to Spain for a job forget it as they are having a worse recession than us. In fact, Polaris World has sold three of its courses already. To top that the heat is unbearable, it was around 34 degrees centigrade when we visited. So, Wendy, if you manage to read my Section news, thanks for the tour.

Now on the membership news. I believe Barry Wilson, of Stocksfield GC, has taken early retirement due to ill health. Let's hope he gets better. Now that he's gone we don't seem to have any golfing members from there to play in our Section do's. Mind you they aren't the only club. One club in the Section has gone one better, having paid the subs for their staff of five for years and years the new manager claims they cannot afford it. Come on, think of the benefits both club and staff get, at this rate we will never achieve good relationships between greenkeeper and the powers that be.

And finally just to remind you that the Autumn comp is at Gosforth GC [Bridal Path] on October 6. Everyone will be notified via T.S.L as they do our

postage, next year. Still going to try and keep it central. Courses being considered are Newcastle Utd in the Spring and Heworth for the Autumn. If anyone wants their course chosen just get in touch with me and I'll see what I can do.

Jimmy Richardson



North Wales

It's hard to believe we're heading into the close of the summer's competitive season already with club finals being played in clubs all over our Section and the scratch season coming to a close all in this next few weeks. Whether it's me getting a little older or time is actually moving faster because the "September blues" as I call it when the days get shorter (and so does your patience!) seems to be happening a lot sooner after the spring flush than it used to.

This month is also the start of autumn renovation, if you've got an understanding committee or board of management, renovation can start early in the month, if you're like the rest of us (which will most probably be the majority of us) you will have to wait until the end of September, when recovery (and the inevitable whinges that follow) takes longer to happen, but that's enough of my whinging.

In local news, congratulations go to Dave Lewis and his team for hosting one of the Ladies European Tour events at Conwy Golf Club, I understand that Dave left the ladies well satisfied! (With the course anyway). Congratulations also go to Ewan Jones, of Eaton Golf Club, and his wife who recently became parents to their baby boy, Zac. It's not only the ground that's fertile at Eaton because Bryn Roberts and his wife are expecting the pater of tiny feet in November as well. Best of luck to you both! Pat Mcateer, of Nefyn Golf Club, has made it on to the Support Team at the Ryder Cup, Well done Pat, show them how professional North Wales greenkeepers work. Last of all don't forget our Autumn Tournament at Mold Golf Club on the 30th. Entry forms to Jez Hughes ASAP please.

All the best until next month

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