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Home from the hills

Some of the hardiest of all grass varieties are finding their way into new turfgrass mixtures that can create the perfect fairway playing surface

The choice of cultivars for fine turf applications such as golf is usually a done deal, with chewings and slender creeping red fescues dominating the mix. But there's a new kid on the block that's set to transform the turfgrass climate of the game.

Well, not so much new as home from the hills. Sheep's and hard fescues have roamed free across much of the grass and moorland of Britain for centuries.

Probably introduced into the catalogue of grass cultivars in the 19th century, they found few if any sporting uses, being sown largely for low maintenance landscape features, where their evolution to cope with the poor quality, well-drained soils of heaths and mountain regions found a ready application.

Hardy, dense, drought resistant and disease tolerant, they're one of the reasons that grass has become so dominant a species across the landscape.

Lush green in winter and summer, these varieties are as tough as they come but only relatively recently have thoughts

turned to applying them to sporting applications requiring the highest quality fine turf.

Preferences are moving strongly towards more sustainable green-keeping practices that focus on less feeding and watering.

The quantities of weed grasses such as *Poa annua* present in many fairways for example has until now made these twin cost centres a fundamental requirement.

Such grasses are both hungry and thirsty and soon show sickly signs if greens staff fail to satisfy their needs.

Sheep's and hard fescues can change all that. They are perfectly comfortable in the kind of conditions that a grass such as *Poa annua* struggles in, allowing managers to introduce a new level of sustainable grass management.

"Areas full of weed grasses such as *Poa annua* are no longer financially viable to feed and water to high standards," said Derek Smith, Amenity Sales Manager for DLF Trifolium.

"We're building on these grasses' ability to tolerate dry conditions and tick all the green boxes that

private and public clubs and facilities are clamouring for in their bid to introduce sustainable grass management," adds Smith.

Leading the charge of sheep's and hard fescues are the cultivars Manetto and Quatro, which DLF Trifolium claims, outstrip many of the current chewings and slender creeping red fescues across the spectrum of characteristics.

Independent trials conducted on the new cultivars prove that they are prime performers in shoot density, visual merit and winter and summer greenness.

"Their fine, dense, exceptional dark green colour is maintained in times when many grasses yellow off," added Derek.

"Extremely hardy and drought resistant, they can stand the close cutting that many golf courses conduct."

The Turfgrass Seed 2011 publication – prepared by the British Society of Plant Breeders in association with the Sports Turf Research Institute – is the bible for seed buyers and the only truly independent source for them to compare the qualities of available cultivars.



Quatro (*Festuca ovina*) and Manetto (*Festuca longifolia*) top the league table (L6) for sheep's and hard fescues respectively for summer sports.

The importance and use of hard and sheep's fescues will rise significantly in the coming years and, as Derek believes, not only because of the improvement in turf quality gained in using them but also in terms of financial benefits gained from lower fertilising, weeding and watering requirements.

"In our breeding plots and in the STRI trials, they have demonstrated an unprecedented degree of disease resistance [Quatro showed by far the greatest resistance to red thread of any of the sheep's and

hard fescues in the table].

"Their exceptional shoot and sward density also reduces the likelihood of weed grasses becoming established as clubs don't want the turf to open up.

"We soon realised their importance in sustainable turf management in fine turf applications.

"Golf fairways for example can demand extensive watering and management so we decided to investigate how Quatro and Manetto could help managers introduce less onerous practices."

At its Didbrook R&D centre in Worcestershire, DLF Trifolium embarked on trials to determine what percentage of sheep's and hard fescues in seed mixtures could create the optimum inclusion rate in its Johnson's seed mixtures to deliver the required benefits.

Over the last two years, its breeding scientists have been proportionately increasing the presence of the cultivars within J Fairway and have doubled the inclusion rate of the original mixture - from 20% to 40%.

"We have settled on 40% as the optimum level - 20% each of Quatro

and Manetto in J Fairway as well as J Premier Fairway mixtures," Smith notes.

"This percentage strikes a good balance in terms of price, speed of establishment - which is not quite as quick as strong creepers but we have included chewings and slender creeping red fescues in the mixture, which shows good salt tolerance and comparable density.

The latest STRI trials demonstrate that we have achieved pretty much the right balance."

The sheep's and hard fescues in the mixtures grow slowly, helping greens staff to reduce the frequency of cutting and the quantity of clippings taken, which in turn reduces their carbon footprint.

According to Derek, the chewings and slender fescues included, offer extra fineness and show strong speed of establishment.

"What develops after sowing is a tight, fine, highly coloured sward, creating what many would argue is the perfect fairway.

A big green carpet that makes lighter demands on staff resourcing and less wear and tear on machinery."

"Golf fairways can demand extensive watering and management so we investigated how Quatro and Manetto could help managers introduce less onerous practices"

Derek Smith, DLF Trifolium

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



Central

The Section AGM was held at Elmwood training room on October 26 with 14 members in attendance. Those present heard how the Section had a successful year with the two golf outings being well supported with the new pair's competition proving popular. This was won by Gavin Neill and Marc Gentles, of St Andrews, who narrowly beat Davie Simpson and Tam Adams, of Crieff, in the final, played over the Rosemount course at Blairgowrie.

The Section had staged a number of educational events in 2011 which were well attended and the various speakers were thanked for their help in staging these. The accounts showed a healthy balance. Derek Robson, Bob Meikle and Gordon Moir remain as Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary respectively, while the only changes on the Committee saw Donald Garner stand down after a number of years service while Lee Strutt and Kenny Liddell were elected to the Committee. Prior to the AGM Cale Bigelow gave an informative presentation on soils and rootzones. At the time of writing, Kenny Archibald, of Sherriff's Amenity, is scheduled to talk on Nov 30, again at the training room at Elmwood, although unfortunately the talk with Marsh Benson, of Augusta National, did not materialise. It has been an exceptionally mild spell of weather in the East through October and early November, ideal for getting on with the winter work. Let's hope it continues.

The Section plans to do all

correspondence by email, or via the website and facebook, next year therefore it's important that members provide their email addresses either to me, gmoir@standrews.org.uk or to BIGGA HQ so we can add them to the database.

Finally for 2011 the Committee congratulates Andy Mellon on his year as National Chairman and wish all our members a merry Christmas and a happy New Year

Gordon Moir



West

Since the last meeting only a couple of items to mention with the most important being the AGM and talk held at Ibrox on October 27, with food and demonstration organised later at Hags Castle Golf Club.

Firstly, may I take this opportunity to say thank you to all who attended and both facilities for allowing proceedings in the first place, unfortunately I did not attend as I was on holiday but I have been informed as to how the day went.

A talk was given by David Roxburgh on the methods used at Ibrox, the problems with light restrictions and how they have managed to combat all the difficulties associated with modern football stadia management. Discussions were taken to the pitch where a demonstration of the artificial lighting method was given and an explanation of how the product works, with a visual inspection showing the impressive results. Next came the AGM itself with some interesting results as Gavin Jarvis had stated he intended stepping down as Secretary but would remain as Treasurer. Two

candidates came forward with Brian Hillen and Fraser Ross putting themselves forward and after a tied vote Fraser Ross was voted in by the Chairman's deciding vote. I wish Fraser all the best in his new role and would like to extend thanks to Gavin for all his work in the last eight years. I would also like to thank the sponsors for the day, Rigby Taylor and Hamilton Bros, for all their efforts and state the Section very much appreciates what they have done for the day to ensure all went successfully.

Some correspondence has been received which I very much appreciate, Neil Lindsay, Head Greenkeeper at Eastwood Golf Club, contacted me to say he had attended a seminar run by Carolyn Hedley, of the Scottish Golf Environment Group, which he thought was extremely interesting stating that he's been in the game 37 years and is still learning. Neil thoroughly recommends people to attend should this run again and if there are any questions to be asked about the day please feel free to contact him on 07747061932.

Secondly, Buchanan Castle Golf Club staff are participating in the well published Movember where all the staff are growing a moustache for charity raising money towards prostate and testicular cancer something very relevant to the male dominated Greenkeeping industry. If anybody in the Section wishes to donate anything then please feel free to contact Mark Cummin on 07747061932 to find out how to go about it.

I hope everybody has a good Christmas time and new year, I will report back on the night out in town on the 25th and how Mark and the chaps got on with Movember.

Finally please contact me if you have anything interesting going on 07790823914 or stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com.

Stuart Taylor



North

Hi it's Ross MacRae here your new Section News person. I would firstly like to thank Dale and Robert for doing the report for the last few months but it's time for them to move over and let a professional do it.

I would like to start with the AGM at Longside Golf Club on October 20. Eighteen members attended and played 18 holes of golf and a good day was had by all. Our thanks go to the Club Council of Longside and Head Greenkeeper, Josh Lester, and his staff, for setting up the golf course.

There were two winners on the day our Chairman, Robert Patterson, Royal Aberdeen, won first prize with George Mitchell. Newmachar, runner up. So well done to them.

There was a change with the committee set up with Robert Hardie stepping down and Paul Sharp, from Peterculter Golf Club, coming on to carry on with the 200 club. The Committee would like to thank Robert for all his hard work over the years and best wishes for the future. Other news is our good friend Brian Anderson has retired early and left Murcar Golf Club after 14 years in charge.

We would like to wish him all the very best for the future. Brian's position has been filled by Bob Mackay who moved up from the Roxburgh, so we would like to wish him the very best in his new role.

I will hopefully have more news next month when I settle more into the job. If you have any news at all please call me on 07588896635.

Thanks for now
Ross MacRae.

Northern Region



Northern

Hello everyone hope you are all well, now the clocks have changed it seems that winter is just around the corner, and time to start on the programme of winter works. On October 18 the Section entered a team in the Inter Section golf at Teesside GC. Thanks go to Tony Smith and his team for a great course and hospitality, also to White Moss for sponsoring the day. It was won by a strong Sheffield side, the present holders of the trophy.

Sadly this is my last newsletter, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support over the last couple of years, and to wish Andy good luck as new Section Secretary.

Lastly, I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas and New Year, and I hope to see you at some of the future golf events. As usual any news or gossip please pass it on to the new sec. Andy Slingsby, 13 The Grove, Baildon, BD17 5NQ, Mob 07506407867, email slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com.

Frank Stewart



Cleveland

Hello everyone, hope you are fit and well. Firstly, the lack of news put into the magazine over the past months is due to the lack of news given to print. Please, if you have any news, send me an email or give me a bell. Apologies on my behalf for one of the months, I forgot to get it in on time.

The clocks have gone back, the leaves are falling and Christmas will be here before we know it. I am just about ready to dig out the old thermals, and everywhere I look on the course there is leaves, leaves and more leaves.

The rather mild temperatures have meant that we are still cutting, albeit not at the same pace as mid-summer but nonetheless, when combined with the monotony of leaf collection, were just about as busy now as we are in summer. I might have to truck a load over to Pembo at Cleveland just so he doesn't forget what they look like!

The Autumn Tournament was scheduled for Wednesday, October 12, at Eaglescliffe G.C, but unfortunately Mother Nature seemed to have different ideas. The heavens opened and the course was unplayable, much to the annoyance I am sure of Geoff and the rest of his team. The day was re scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, and was kindly sponsored by Rigby Taylor. Unfortunately I could not attend but I am told that the course and the greens were in unbelievable condition, and given that it had to be re scheduled to a later date - a great course was produced by Geoff and his team. Following the golf, a lovely meal was served in the clubhouse and prizes were handed out. Results are as follows

1. Martin Woods, 40pts; 2. Phil Hargraves, 38pts (back 9); 3. Alan Reid 38pts; 4. Paul Legg 36pts; 5. And, with the words of , "God knows how" Bishop's very own stand up comic, Phil Graham, 33pts; 6. Spuggy, 32pts (back 9); 7. Mark Brown 32pts; 8. Richie Hood, 30pts; 9. Chris Fidell, 29pts (back 9)

Trade Prize winner was David Snowdon. Longest Drive was claimed by Phil Hargrave. Nearest the Pin was won by Paul Legg.

Just like on Bullseye, Pembo always makes sure no one goes home empty handed and everyone got a prize with the famous Pembo fun dip raffle, complete with Halloween buckets and sweets, it meant everyone won something.

It goes without saying that we are in very tough times, and as such, for any business or organisation to allow something such as courtesy golf is a kind gesture.

With that in mind I would like to on behalf of the Cleveland Section, thank Eaglescliffe G.C and its officials for allowing us courtesy on the course. Thanks to the catering staff and clubhouse staff also.

Thanks to, in no particular

order, Border Sports, Aitkens, Blade Amenity, Boxer Chemicals and Turfcare, for donating prizes and supporting our events.

A big thank you to Rigby Taylor, and Jamie Applegarth, for sponsoring the day, without such support these days would not be possible.

Finally, these days do not run smoothly just by themselves. It takes a lot of hard work and commitment to organise cards, prizes and make all the catering arrangements. Ian Pemberton is the man who works very hard time after time, organising and picking up prizes, receiving entries, sorting cards out etc. It goes without saying that Ian deserves a big pat on the back for his hard work.

By the time you read this some of our Section events will have been and gone, but the Annual "Bring a bottle" at Cleveland GC is scheduled for Tuesday, December 13. Tee off will be 10.30am but you must arrive at 9.30am. The cost of this is only £15 and includes a meal afterwards. You must provide a bottle with preferably a good content of alcohol, all wrapped

up for the raffle.

These days are very popular, and the links at this time of year has provided us with great conditions in the past. Book early to avoid disappointment. Cheques or cash must be sent to Ian Pemberton, 6 Rosewood Court, Marton, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS7 8QR. The cheque must be made payable to Cleveland BIGGA Section.

That's all for now

Any news contact me 07921817857 or kevscarce@aol.com

Kevin Scarce



North Wales

Hopefully by now we're heading towards completion on the major construction work planned for this winter, I don't know about you but I always feel it's best out of the way by the Christmas break and before the really bad weather kicks in.

The autumn tournament took

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Jill on 01347 833800

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place at Porthmadog golf club on October 11 and with 32 players the results came in as follows:

1. Andrew "Acorn" Cornes & Huw Brown, 39 pts; 2. Barry Jones & Garry Huggett, 37 pts (BIH); 3. A. Hughes & K. Griffiths, 37 pts. Nearest the Pin went to Jez Hughes, on the 2nd and Peter Lacey, on the 9th.

I didn't attend this tournament but by all accounts the course was in brilliant condition an absolute testament to the hard work of Gareth "Bronco" Williams and team. You have every reason to be proud! A big thank you also goes to the clubhouse staff for the warm welcome and good hospitality.

The Christmas Tournament and AGM took place at Heswall Golf Club on December 7, as always this column goes to print before the actual day so as usual results and write up will be posted in January's column.

The regional seminar took place at Birchwood golf club on November 30. The subject was "Weather it's ecologically sound" and the day was a success with very interesting speakers. It was a real treat to be able to attend a regional seminar and I only hope that splitting the seminar between a northern and southern venue continues.

We are considering once again this year putting on a coach to Harrogate to take in the show but it will only be organised if there are enough "bums on seats" so anyone interested please contact Jeremy or myself, we need to know numbers by Monday, January 9 so we can decide viability of the trip and organise a coach. Don't forget to check out our Facebook group North Wales bigga and also the main BIGGA website for upcoming events and discussion boards.

I believe that just about covers everything for this month so all the best until next year!

Pete Maybury e-mail petemayb66@aol.com mobile 07756001187



North East

Right here we go again with the Section news. Always a

hard time of the year for doing a report, made worse for no news coming in via the telephone or mobile. Let's see what I can make up this time (just joking).

No doubt a lot of courses will be in full swing on their winter programme. One such course is my ex-workplace Hexham which is having to alter the right side of the 2nd par-3 hole due to it being a health and safety issue, with the steep bank right of the existing path. The bank steepness is to be altered so it can be maintained more easily, plus the bunkers are being brought up to the same design as the rest of the course which has seen all the bunkers done over a period of six years.

Just been checking on membership in the Section and numbers have dropped over the last couple of years, there has been at least three retirements, redundancies, relocation and those who have not renewed for various reasons. You don't have to play golf to be a member there are lots of greenkeepers in our Section who are not members, or have ever been, so I say to the Head Greenkeeper "Come on get your staff signed up, there are loads of benefits for all".

Next year will hopefully see two new courses chosen for the Spring and Autumn comps. Apparently the Cleveland Section would like to try their luck against us in a match. Let's hope they can do better at match-play than stroke-play if the recent team event at Teeside Golf Club is anything to go by for the Whitmoss Shield, I must congratulate Head Greenkeeper, Tony Smith, on his course as it was in first class condition. As everyone agreed a fine day was had by all.

Reckon that's all I can muster up this time hope some news comes in shortly.

Jimmy Richardson



Sheffield

It's upon us again and seems to have got here quicker than wanted. It's Christmas - a time to forget our woes and revel in the Christmas spirit for a few days.

I would like to thank everyone who attended our Autumn Lecture, which was a fantastic afternoon with a very inspirational speaker in Jim McKenzie MBE.

It was particularly nice to hear Jim talk about his staff with such passion over the four days of the Ryder cup and praise them for what was truly a massive operation.

I would like to thank Jim for taking the time to come to Sheffield and provide such entertainment and insight for our members. I would also like to thank Cheshire Turf Machinery and Whitmoss for their sponsorship which enabled the day to go ahead.

I'm sure you will have all received your Christmas golf invitations and you will have all posted them back to Andy, and don't forget it's everyone's favourite time of the year and the AGM. A full results list will be posted on Facebook and in next month's issue.

It is with regret that I have to announce our Treasurer, Alan Sampson, has decided to hand over the reigns this year.

Alan has been an extremely dedicated servant to the Section for many years and covered many roles. The work he does is a massive help to the Section and the operation runs very smoothly because of this. I would personally like to thank Alan for his work and I'm sure you all will as well.

Due to this we will be looking for someone to fill the role and Alan has agreed to help a willing volunteer into the role for a while, which is very good of him.

I expect my phone will red hot with members wishing to take on the role and dependant on numbers we may have to look into an interview process to find the ideal candidate!

As a Committee we are striving once again to improve the Section for the year coming and have many ideas we are trying to get off the ground but as I have said before if any members have any ideas then please contact a member of your Committee.

I hope you all have the most wonderful Christmas and New Year and a very prosperous 2012.

Best wishes
Jim Stevens

Midland Region



East Midlands

Hello all,

The first thing to do is apologise for the lack of updates over the last two issues. Unfortunately I have been away and busy, as much as I would like to think I was busy being away on a beach in the Caribbean, it has not been so! And it's been as boring as being busy in the day job!

We have lots to catch up on so I will crack on with news on the Headland Pairs competition. The final was played over the challenging Oxfordshire GC and saw Glyn Buckby & Simon Banks take on Adi Porter & Frank Kempster. After a close run match Glyn and Simon ran out victors on the 16th green with a 3&2 win. Congratulations to them and thanks to everybody that took part in the competition this year.

Forest Hill GC was the venue for our autumn comp and AGM. News on the golf in a moment! At the AGM all committee members were re-elected, with myself as Chairman and Treasurer; Nick Miles, as Secretary; Greg Skinner as Vice Chairman, Nigel Colley as "Director of golf" (come on guys we all know that in the golf industry every management committee has to have one!) and Asa English, who was welcomed onto the committee in a soon to be disclosed role. Carl Chamberlain was also re-elected as our trade representative. The committee restated its desire to try and encourage more members to attend events and as such will endeavour to host some different days out and trips, so watch this space!

Now, back onto the golf results, and it goes without question that the first thing to do is to thank our sponsors for the day, these were Henton and Chattell, Sherriff Amenity, Banks Amenity and Amenity Technology, and, as always, Tacit for the Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive comps. The course at Forest Hill was in tremendous condition, and we

would like to extend our thanks to Course Manager, Greg Skinner, and his team, with many of us commenting that we were looking forward to returning to play from some of the new tees! Nearest the Pin was won by Nigel Colley, and Mick Marvel respectively, with Dan Branson and Gary Thurman winning their respective Longest Drive competitions. The main competition was a Texas Scramble, played in teams of three, in third place was the team of James Robson, Andy Marsh and Chris Weir, second place was the team of Sam Voss, Adrian Henshaw and Roger Lupton. The winning team consisted of Lee Wenlock, Asa English and Dave Smith, and for those of you that know Dave, you know we won't hear the end of that one! Once again thanks to our sponsors, without your continued support we would not be able to host these successful days.

Our next event is our Christmas competition and "Super Raffle" this is to be held at Lingdale GC, and by now you would all have received your entry forms, so I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Regards to all,
Pete Smith

Midland



The final of the Scotts (now Everris Ltd) Doubles Final took place at the magnificent Wentworth Club, over the famous West Course. As always the finalists were welcomed with breakfast in the Clubhouse where they were surprised to be serenaded on the piano by Bruce Forsyth!

The golf course was in great condition as always and our special thanks to Chris Kennedy for allowing us the privilege of playing the course once again. The eventual winners were David Fellows from Cocks Moors Woods and his partner Rob Rowson from The Forest of Arden, who managed to defeat Steve Thompson from Trentham and his partner Leigh Swann from Trentham Park by a margin of 3&1. Congratulations to Dave and Rob. Our

biggest thanks are reserved for Mark Rayner, and Everris, whose hospitality is always first class so many, many thanks to you, Mark.

I now come to some saddening news, the fact that Abbey Mowers has disbanded. Mick Shaw has supported our Section for as long as I've been greenkeeping, quite a while then. From a personal note and indeed I feel the Section, Mick, we wish you well, and I dare say you won't be kept down for long our friend.

This month's calendar sponsor is our old stilton (come on it is the month of the birth of Christ), Tony Cheese, representing Rigby Taylor. Their Mascot range of fertilisers, seeds, pesticides, and other products within their fine remit are more than worthy of consideration. Tony can be contacted on: 07778 665 506 or emailed on: t.cheese@rigbytaylor.com .

Now looking forward to next year, there is an educational trip to the John Deere factory in Nottingham, Langer, through Kev Pugh and Farols. The trip is arranged for Wednesday, January 11, 2012, it includes travel from relevant locations within the Section, a tour of the factory, a talk about John Deere and free lunch.

If you are interested please contact either Rhys Thomas on: 07775 581 615 or Kev Pugh on: 07943 192 498.

We now come to the last words of 2011 and I have promised you all tales from the river bank for a number of months now. I shall spare you this once, just to say the photos of lovely sea trout landed (of course, returned), and the Salmon that got away, blar, blar, blar.

However, I do feel, more importantly, that we all owe a thanks of gratitude to our long suffering Committee members, who, it must be remembered, serve our Section within their own time and generate some excellent golfing and educational events, and also through their determination secure great sponsorship funds.

Our thanks to all of our sponsors and a merry Christmas to you all, and I'm sure you will all join me to thank our committee on the fine works that they have achieved during 2011.

A very merry Christmas to all,
Sean McDade

East of England



It seems strange as I write this at the end of October but Happy Christmas to everybody. Who knows what the weather will be doing by the time you read this. Hopefully things will have turned colder (without the snow) that the unseasonably mild conditions we seem to be having at the moment.

Our AGM and October golf day took place on October 12, at Orton Meadows Golf Club, in Peterborough. An interesting layout was provided in excellent condition by Head Greenkeeper, Phillip Wright, and his team.

The results of the day are as follows: 1. Steve Hopkins, 4 5 pts (as Competitions' Secretary he should be looking at his handicap!); 2. Phillip Wright (local knowledge); 3. Rob Welford; Trade: Gary Cooper; Longest Drive: Colin Hopper; Nearest the Pin: Phillip Wright

Orton Meadows is different in that what was once the clubhouse is now a restaurant run by Beefeater and it was here that our AGM was held, which was well attended as usual. No changes were made at committee level and detailed annual reports were given by the Chairman and Secretary/Treasurer.

After the golf we were allowed to choose from the two courses for £10 menu which included 12oz rump steak and "bottomless" chips that was very well received!

Thanks for the day go to all at Orton Meadows and the Beefeater and also to the spon-

sors for the day, Colliers and Farmura for their excellent prize table and continued support of our section.

All that is left is for me to say all the best to everyone for the New Year. Hopefully things will improve for everyone out there that is struggling at the moment.

Steve Beverly
Immingham Golf Club.



BB&O

By the time you read this we will have played the Turkey Trot event at The Buckinghamshire Golf Club, weather permitting, either that or we will be under snow! Results will be published in next month's magazine. The standard and quality of courses played at this year's events has been fantastic and a credit to the respective Course Managers and their teams. In what has been a tough year it is heartening to see guys producing great golf courses which are a credit to the profession. It's worth mentioning that without the generous support of our sponsors these events could not happen and their commitment is greatly appreciated.

There have been some changes to the BB&O Section, with Matt Nutter taking over as Secretary. As you will have read in last month's column Mark Day has sharpened his (slightly withered) pencil for the last time! The Section would like to pass on their thanks to Mark for his efforts over the years. The BB&O website is being updated and improved which will fea-

BIGGA Regional Conferences

Northern

29th November 2011, **Cookridge Hall Golf Club**

30th November 2011, **Birchwood Golf Club**

Contact Peter Larter, RA, 01476 550115

South East

16 November 2011, **Stock Brook Manor Golf Club, Essex**

Contact Clive Osgood, RA, 01737 819343

South West & Wales

17 November 2011, **Oaktree Arena, Highbridge, Somerset**

Contact Jane Jones, RA, 01454 270850

Scotland

6 March 2012, **Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline**

Contact Peter Boyd, RA, 0141 616 3440

ture: news, fixtures, education, entry forms, golf days, jobs and competitions. The site can be viewed at www.bbogreenkeepers.co.uk. It has never been easier to network or keep up to date with what is happening. The BB&O Section has set up both Twitter and Facebook accounts. On Twitter we can be found at <http://www.twitter.com/bbogreenkeepers> and join us on facebook under the group name BB&O Golf Section.

The Section was well represented at the National Championship, sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota, which were played over a cracking course at West Lancashire. David Lyons led after the first round, however, the following days scores suffered where conditions were tough not helped by a night out on the town in Liverpool! The Midlands Section was well represented finishing runners-up in the Regional Cup which consisted of David Lyons, John Bowness (both from Deamwood Park), Simon Wooley (Castle Royal) and Paul Reeve.

The Rigby Taylor Pairs final was contested between Sonning GC and Deanwood Park GC, at The Berkshire GC. The teams were blessed with fantastic autumn weather coupled with superb playing surfaces producing some great golf – match play at its best! A big thank you must go to Moggie and his team for making everyone very welcome. Following some great golf both teams reached the 18th all-square. David Lyons and John Bowness continued their good form to win the final hole, crowning them the 2011 Rigby Taylor Winners. Congratulations I'm sure you will look forward to defending your title next year.

Our thanks to Gareth Acteson, of Rigby Taylor, for his continued support organising this event each year.

In other news from the Section Dan Lightfoot and his team at Bearwood Lakes have been busy over the summer with an ambitious renovation programme. The results look impressive with many positive comments received. This will undoubtedly set the bar higher maintaining and strengthening the clubs ethos and reputation. The team will be busy as they push on with the next phase of works this winter.

The committee are working

hard to improve the Section for the benefit of all members. If anyone has any news, views or ideas they would like to see for the BB&O section then please don't hesitate to get in touch: bboscribe@gmail.com or alternatively contact Matt Nutter bbosecretray@gmail.com

Lastly, as winter is upon us, I would like to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing many of you again next year - role on 2012!

South East Region



East Anglia

I am pleased to report that our illustrious Secretary is alive and very well. After intensive tests and sleepless nights in hospital he came out with a virtually clean bill of health and contrary to popular belief, he is not the missing link!

Our latest venue was Aldeburgh Golf Club and after a mix up with the tee times, 50 of us ended up playing foursomes which was a shame as we could not play the course as we would have wished but it was the best of a bad job and it wasn't raining.

The course was in a fantastic condition thanks to Mark Broughton and his team. The greens were something else. Green lino perhaps? It was a privilege to be there. Well done mate.

Some of us (not me) managed to master the greens however, by using a feather duster instead of a putter.

Results: Tony Thacker & Nick Howes, 34 pts; 2. Ian Cambridge & Richard Southall, 30 pts; 3. Peter Howard (only 3rd) & Ray Forem, 29 pts; Danny Perring & Will Law, 29 pts

Nearest the Pin:- that's a laugh on those greens; 50 feet was a miracle! On the 17th it was Rob Boyce (28 ft 6 ins and he three putted). On the 4th it was Adrian Kersey (6 ft 11 ins and he four putted).

I may be prone to slight exaggeration from time to time and must never be taken too

seriously – just in case anyone wants to take me to court!

I digress. Longest drive - 9th Steve Dickinson and Longest drive - 18th Mike Virley

The main sponsor of the day was Tomlinson Groundcare – which reminds me, we all saw 'Tomo' by the 10th tee with his "nuts out" and other refreshments. Well someone, I think it was Nick Ashman, drank some firewater then proceeded to fall in the bunker by the 10th green, for which he was awarded the infamous loo seat.

Other trade donations came from our loyal supporters as ever: Aitkens, Bartram Mowers, Ernest Doe, Headland, Rigby Taylor and Ben Burgess.

Pause for thought:- Two Head Greenkeepers were discussing the merits (or lack of) of a Greens Committee – one said it took his committee two hours to decide the date of their next meeting. The other one said "only two hours"!

One final thought. I didn't know they had motor bikes on Thorpeness! Well on this note I got from Ian it says T.T. December 7.

That's all folks. Mick Lathrope

Sussex



The annual match with Sussex, Surrey and Essex was recently played at Chichester Golf Club. Unfortunately, Essex could not make the numbers on the day and the competition was left to Sussex against Surrey. The course was in great nick and the food was excellent but Sussex were the underdogs on the day losing by just four points. Nearest the Pat the 15th hole went to Surrey man, Phil Rowlands, the Longest Drive at the 8th went to Surrey man, Jamie Jacklin. Overall, 41 well-earned points on count back went to a Sussex man (normally the bridesmaid) Glynn Pollard. Many thanks must go to everyone at Chichester Golf Club for making it such an enjoyable day.

Commiserations has to go to yours truly and Glynn Pollard who were knocked out of the Sussex Bowl by Gary Ogilvie and George Barr at Worthing

Golf Club. Gary played very well scoring a hand full of birdies. George was also there.

I would like to hear from Sussex members with any news to report Around the Greens. There must be a lot of activity out there that is not being brought to my attention for this very informative, well presented monthly communication for all. Contact me by phone or email.

Eric Green
Beauport Park Golf Club
01424-214600
07805-024001
TheGreens837@aol.com



Kent

And so to the end of another year. A year of highs and lows that's for sure, but certainly finishing on a high for me. Our Section's golfing year has seen us travel to golf clubs at Lydd, Knole Park, Sittingbourne and, just a couple of weeks ago, to Redliffbits. We have seen so many new faces this year and we thank every one of you for your support for our Section and helping us to promote the image of professional greenkeepers up and down the land.

We would like to thank all these clubs for hosting events this year and we would also like to offer sincere thanks to all our sponsors for their generosity in continuing to support our Section. We have now produced a full fixture list for next year, so please visit our website for full details.

Sorry this is only a short report but will make up for it next month with details of our Turkey Trot, AGM and extended prizegiving at Redliffbits.

Merry Christmas and a successful 2012

Best of British. Rob Holland
www.kentgreenkeepers.com

South East Regional Conference

16 November 2011, **Stock Brook Manor Golf Club, Essex**
Contact Clive Osgood, RA,
01737 819343

Surrey



Monday November 7. I have today been ringing a few Surrey members in the hope that someone has an exciting bit of news for me to relate to you all. Well, I have warned you many times in the past that if you don't tell me I will tell you. Therefore my latest holiday, was short, only a weekend break, Friday, October 28 to Sunday, October 30, in Studland Bay, Dorset, only a stone's throw from The Isle of Purbeck GC. I did not play golf, I did not join two other males in their pursuit of an all over sun tan on the naturist beach and I did not swim in the sea. I did eat three meals a day, drank a little vino and sampled the local public transport service, using my bus pass, to the delightful but slightly damp seaside resort of Swanage. Now if that doesn't bore you to tears, again be warned, I can go on with this sort of interesting travelogue for as long as it takes.

I hope you enjoyed the seminar, arranged by Les Howkins, on December 1. I was hoping to put the information in last month's edition but the speakers had not been finalised. Cameron McMillan was hopefully participating, probably on the same subject on which he will be speaking at Harrogate. Thursday, October 27.

Many Surrey members gathered at Epsom GC to recognise the semi retirement of one of the industry's most underrated, but extremely handsome salesmen. Ron Christie and with limited help, but strong encouragement, from Douglas Iolanthe Fernie were the duo who thought up this tribute to the one and only yours truly.

Thanks to all my friends who attended this extravaganza and presented me with a fine selection of red wines and I look forward to next year, when I think we should do it all over again. Dan and Duncan, two Kent members who travelled far to be there, were also especially welcome. I played with Douglas, Ron and Paul Weston and with a little coaching from me Douglas [El Bandito] with

43 points came first and Paul [Aqua Cushman] was, with 37 points, runner up. Mark Harvey, Course Manager at Epsom, gets my gratitude for presenting the course, as always, in the sort of condition we expect and hope to find at any venue greenkeepers attend.

I have today been sent, by a Surrey Member, an informative text regarding this year's late leaf fall and how they are coping with the huge increase in the number of acorns, 10 times more than usual. He was also concerned that they are today under attack from a flock of seagulls, reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's movie 'The Birds', but he did not go into details. If you have suffered from any similar problems please discuss them with this member, who wishes to remain anonymous, personally. Name and telephone number are available from the appropriate authority.

This is the sort of information I need to interest my readers, so please, follow XXX's example and text me your thoughts and experiences or it's back to the isle that's whiter than Wight.

Brian Willmott
07879474038. Email brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk

South West and South Wales Region



South Wales

Hello South Wales. Well last month I wrote about the Rugby World Cup and I was hoping to be able to call ourselves World Champions but unfortunately there was a certain Irish French referee that had something to do with that! I'm so proud of all the lads it was great to be Welsh again even the Welsh flag was flying above Downing Street. Fair weather supporters I call it!

Onto the matters in hand we have held our autumn South Wales golf tournament at the beautiful Trefloyne Golf Club.

The course was outstanding how Gareth Knight and his one other staff member can maintain the course at that high standard is incredible. On the day the rain did threaten but we fortunately did miss all the showers and a good competition was had with Big D eventually knocking Andy Roach off the top spot. Peter Lacey was back in the prizes as the Trade Winner with Wayne Bengier and Nigel Ruck winning the Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin respectively. A thank you must also go out to the catering staff whose meal and dessert after the golf was second to none.

With the golf over it was one last chance to have a beer with Steve Chappell before he left for Gleneagles and so I'm led to believe there wasn't much beer left in Tenby that evening! Again all the best to Steve and his family heading up north we wish you the best of luck and dryness possible.

Prior to the golf we did hold our AGM with Steve Chappell standing down Gareth Knight has been elected Secretary, Paul Handy as Chairman and myself back on as the Trade representative. Gareth and the committee will be looking at new fresh ideas to continue the great work that Steve Chappell has started and we will be looking very shortly of arranging a new format for the Countrywide Evening Lecture Series and everyone will receive an email confirming what all our new plans will be.

Royal Porthcawl Golf Club has now been confirmed as the host venue for the 2014 and 2019 Seniors British Open Golf Championship a huge congratulations to Ian Kinley, his team The Royal Porthcawl GC and even the Welsh Assembly, for supporting this event and again putting Wales golf and Welsh greenkeeping high up on the map. I have recently seen some of the subtle changes to some of the greens and realignment of some strategic bunkering not to mention the new 5th back tee possibly slightly sadist!

All the improvements are fantastic and I can't wait to play them in the New Year. With our Winter Competition being held here for the second year running on December 13, hopefully all of you guys can

Assistant Profile

Our monthly look into the life of an assistant greenkeeper...

Name:

Simon Connah

Age: 39

Club:

St. Andrews Links Trust

Position:

Deputy Course Manager, Old Course.

Nickname: Si (there are others)!



1. How long have you been greenkeeping? 22 Years.

2. What was it about the career that attracted you? I was lucky enough to work at the 84 Open whilst at school. My Grandfather also knew Walter Woods!!

3. If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be? Musician.

4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?

Training & Developing Staff hopefully to help them progress.

5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?

Dealing with Staff discipline issues as most could easily be avoided.

6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot?

An upturn in the Golf Industry which would hopefully provide opportunities for all, especially the Trainee Greenkeepers coming through College.

7. Hobbies? Football, Rugby Union, Live Music & Drumming.

8. Favourite Band?

Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band.

9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?

Dundee United FC

10. What is your claim to fame? Appeared on Sky Sports News chatting to, or maybe looked like 'harassing', Tiger Woods for his signature at the 2010 Open!

Around The Green

attend the day and see some of the changes Ian has put to the course.

With Harrogate again coming closer please guys contact Jane Jones she has fantastic rates on rooms at the Cairns Hotel it would be fantastic to see as many of us up there as possible next year and yes I will get the beers in just you guys get up there.

Thanks for reading guys
Peter Holmstrom



South West

Hi Everyone, I have to start by apologising to you all for what has been a rather quiet month. So this is going to be short but still very sweet. I want to let you know what we have going on at the moment.

Paul and I are very keen at arranging more workshops/training days. Please feel free to let us know what it is you want to do and we'll do our best for you.

Any of you looking at attending Harrogate 2012, we can offer a free place, this is courtesy of our patronage partners. Send a letter or email to myself, stating why you should attend and what benefits you will receive while you are there.

An important date for your diary, Wednesday, December 14, the South West Section visits Burnham & Berrow G.C, this will be for our Christmas tournament, you know you really don't want to miss out on this!

We also have a new Facebook page for the South West Section, one that will make it much more convenient for you all to use, you don't having to do anything, just enjoy this amazing feature you have at your finger tips.

I would like to thank our patronage partners for all of their support for 2011, Ecosol, Irritech Limited, Countrywide, British Seed Houses, Seadland, Avoncrop, Martyn Lane Golf Signs. Your support is very much appreciated by the whole Section.

See you all very soon,
adam.l.matthews@hotmail.co.uk
07732503855



Devon and Cornwall

Our November meeting was held at Carlyon Bay GC, in St Austell, Cornwall. A total of 55 attendees braved what was testing weather conditions for both the golf and the course walk. Despite the weather, the course held up very well. The Course walk was led by Brian Summers, Past Course Manager, and Steven Pope, Course Manager. Brian explained how the course was owned by the Brend Hotel Group and how the greenkeeping team structure was dictated by the owner's wishes.

Each area of the course is the responsibility of an individual i.e. one person in charge of greens, one in charge of fairways and so on.

This structure has been put in place so that each person can be held accountable for their area. Steven explained how this can be very frustrating and they are hoping to revert back to a more holistic approach where all staff can multi-task and be involved with maintaining all areas of the course.

There were many interesting features of the course including the remnants of old mine works throughout the course. A big thank you to Brian and Steve for their time and enthusiasm in leading the course walk.

The golf was an individual Stableford competition and a big thank you to those who took part and played as many holes as they could bear. For those who did actually make it around all 18 holes, prizes were sponsored by Devon Garden Machinery and Everris.

In first place with 28 points and winning on count back was Lloyd Overy, Lakeview GC, in second place was Graham Clarke, Chulmleigh, and in third was Jason Brooks, Torquay GC, with 27 points.

After a very welcome lunch our educational speaker for the day was Paul Morris, from GBR Technology. Paul's background is a chemist (Masters from Oxford), with 11 years formulating experi-

ence in surfactant containing products at Castrol (the surface treatment division rather than engine oils) and seven years at BASF selling surfactants into a range of industries including agrochemical adjuvants and turf wetting formulators. Most of the surfactant used in turf wetting preparations in the UK is BASF material. GBR Technology Ltd was incorporated in 1985 and has a heritage traced back to the Kodak Corporation over 40 years ago. The company developed a range of wetting agents in 2009 and have a reasonably small but growing number of accounts. Paul talked through the chemical structure of surfactants and how they work along with how they can be used. A big thank you to Paul for travelling down and giving up his time to share his specialist and extensive knowledge in this area.

Huge thanks to all the staff at Carlyon Bay for a great day despite the adverse weather conditions. Also, a big thank you to Steve Dommett, from Devon Garden, and Mark Raynor, from Everris, for attending, giving out the prizes and sponsoring the day.

Duchy College is offering a free Assessor update training session for Greenkeepers from Devon and Cornwall. This is for existing assessors who currently hold the D32/33 or A1 qualifications to meet the new TAQA Assessor requirements. This is a part of the Greenkeeper Industry Liaison and Standardisation Meeting taking place at Stoke Climsland in HE 2 on 07/12/11 from 9:00am-4:15pm (lunch provided). To get more details and to book your place, please contact Karen Davey 01579372220.

Our next meeting is our Christmas Meeting at Ashbury Golf Club, near Okehampton, in Devon. The format for the day will be to either play golf or attend the course walk, this will be followed by Christmas lunch, prizes and raffle. Following this there will be the opportunity to take part in various activities including snooker, indoor bowls and ten-pin bowling. The theme for the day will be "Devon v Cornwall".

There will be the opportunity to book accommodation at a cost of £25, this includes bed and breakfast and a further round of

BIGGA welcomes the following new members

Scotland

Christopher Wright, West Section
Peter Murray, Central Section
Alistair Morrison, Central Section
David Burgess, North
Ryan Stanhouse, Central
Jamieson Henderson, Central
Elliott Smith, Central

Northern Region

Scott Needs, Northern
Mark James, North
Robert Lydon, North Wales
Daniel Hahn, North West
Christopher Chippindale, Northern
Niall Robinson, Sheffield
William Marriott, Sheffield
Liam Plummer, Sheffield
Stephen Warne, Sheffield
Shaun Howbrook, North West

Midland Region

Jack Glover, Midland
Stephen Craft, Berks/Bucks & Oxon
Simon Beard, East Midland

South East Region

Joseph Blake, Surrey
Alastair Moore, Kent
Phillip Cork, Surrey
Aaron Temple, Surrey
Ross Slade, Kent
Daniel Weston, Kent
Joshua Pickersgill, Surrey

South West/South Wales Region

Robbie Vennard, South West
Graham Howard, South Coast

Overseas

Georgi Farfarov, Bulgaria
Yavor Atanasov, Bulgaria
Andrew Harvey, Netherlands

For more information on new members log in to the Members' Area of the BIGGA Website.

BIGGA Regional Conferences

Northern

29th November 2011,
Cookridge Hall Golf Club

30th November 2011,
Birchwood Golf Club
Contact Peter Larter, RA,
01476 550115

South East

16 November 2011, **Stock Brook Manor Golf Club, Essex**

Contact Clive Osgood, RA,
01737 819343

South West & Wales

17 November 2011, **Oaktree Arena, Highbridge, Somerset**
Contact Jane Jones, RA,
01454 270850

Scotland

6 March 2012, **Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline**
Contact Peter Boyd, RA,
0141 616 3440