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**JACOBSEN**



David Greenshields is Barenbrug's Research and Development Manager

# The Alchemist

When it comes to getting better cultivars into your sward, don't be bamboozled by what's on offer. David Greenshields, lifts the lid on the art of grass seed breeding and blending

**A common question I'm asked by greenkeepers and turf professionals is if and/or when they should change the grass seed mixture they're using.**

The advice from leading independent advisors is, quite rightly, to consider changing what you're using from time to time in order to add to the diversity of your sward to improve overall performance.

And it is also understandable that many turf professionals are bamboozled when told they should change a grass seed mixture that has performed well over the years. But it's important to understand that you can still follow this sound advice without necessarily needing to 'change' your mixture. So how does this work?

'Change' can take place over time in the form of the individual cultivars that make up your preferred grass seed mixture, rather than moving away from the mixture or brand itself. For example, we regu-

larly test new cultivars in mixture synergy trials prior to introducing the re-formulated mixture into the market, thus ensuring users can enjoy improved performance year-on-year by selecting what can be perceived as the 'same' mixture.

So let's take a closer look at this issue...

## Breeding breakthroughs

Let's start with the role of the breeder. Grass seed breeders work to improve and update cultivars on an ongoing basis, providing turf professionals with characteristics like disease and drought tolerance, cool-temperature germination and rapid recovery from wear. You name a problem, you can be sure there's a breeder out there pioneering a new cultivar to solve it!

That's why it's vital that these breeding breakthroughs are introduced into our playing surfaces – they contribute not insignificantly to providing the protection we so

need from disease incidence or adverse climatic conditions. Without them, a surface left unseeded for a prolonged period, or reseeded with an unchanged mixture, will become increasingly susceptible to stress.

Once one of our global network of plant breeders has produced a cultivar that, say, provides improved tolerance to Leaf Spot disease, it's then up to us to make the most of that breakthrough.

How individual cultivars are selected, trialled and harnessed within a mixture aside for a moment, this brings us to the key point of difference between breeding companies and grass seed importers.

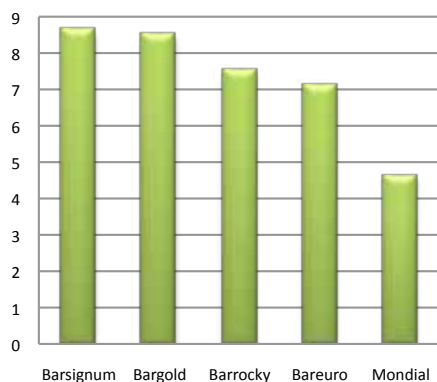
Only a breeding company that understands the value of applied research and development – i.e. a grass seed company investing and involved in the process of developing new cultivars through a comprehensive trialling programme







**The improvements in Fineness of Leaf:  
Barenbrug cultivars in BAR Extreme versus  
bottom of Table L1 Turfgrass Seed 2011**



– can provide you with the latest solutions and all the benefits these bring. We are constantly looking at how we can better our mixtures with the latest Barenbrug-bred cultivars – to do so takes time and money, hence we are a premium-priced product with added value in terms of performance capability.

Compare this approach with those who buy-in grass seed from various sources either ready-blended or blend it themselves without the benefit of a breeding, and research and development programme – without expertise or passion.

This means products from breeding companies will include the latest cultivars as a matter of course. So, perhaps you've been using the same mixture – let's say our BAR Fescue – for several years. But, as we'll see, it's changed and evolved over time. If you're buying seed from a breeding company, you are replenishing your sward and improving disease tolerance without necessarily knowing it!

#### Mixture synergy

Let's say, at the other end of the scale, you do know your cultivars from your mixtures, breeding companies and marketing blarf. A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, as they say!

Lots of turf professionals, understandably, look at individual cultivar characteristics – perhaps consulting the British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB) Turfgrass Seed guide – to solve problems. It makes sense – you want a bent grass mixture for your greens, so you naturally gravitate towards the top-performing cultivar on that particular table and give the 'agent' company a call.

This may sound surprising coming from a company whose cultivars regularly top the tables. but, finding the perfect grass seed blend is a kind of alchemy.

That's where mixture synergy comes into its own.

By carefully selecting desirable characteristics, and considering how different strengths and traits might complement or compete with each other, we research and develop the mixtures that eventually make it to market. This is a long process – it can take a full 15 years to develop a new cultivar, through breeding, in-house research, in-field trials with turf professionals and official testing systems; each a vital and valuable part of the process.

Along the way, we might discover a cultivar that scored well in the Turfgrass Seed guide for fineness

of leaf improves a mixture dramatically – and gives, let's say, added cool temperature growth or extra disease resistance to boot. It's fascinating.

#### Buy right

We all need to remember that you can't look at key characteristics of cultivars in isolation to find the optimum solution to a particular problem, be it recurring disease or a salt-ravaged links course. Nor can the constant chopping and changing of products, or – more worryingly – brands, magically replenish and revive your playing surface.

So what can you do? Well, you can educate yourself about the differences we've discussed here and make informed buying decisions. Ask questions. What new cultivars does your chosen grass seed mixture contain? When was it last refreshed? How often has it been reformulated in the last five or 10 years? When you take into account the wider relationship-building and problem-solving role of grass seed breeding companies, it's unfortunate to see venues make poor product choices.

Let's take a look at a couple of examples of mixtures we've evolved to show just how much products can change over the space of a few years...

- BAR Fescue has changed significantly in the last five years. We've most recently seen the introduction of innovative new cultivars like Viktorika (25%), Barswing (20%) and Bargreen II (15%), together with 25% Barcrown and 15% Barbirdie, to create the mixture's current composition. Compare this to its 2006 formulation of 50% Bargreen, 25% Barcrown and 25% Barpearl. These latest additions bring improved desirable characteristics – combined disease tolerance and cool soil temperature germination – that are an improvement on the previous incarnation.

- BAR 7 is currently undergoing something of a revolution. Having developed a unique Regenerating Perennial Ryegrass (RPR), we soon saw how its creeping growth habit, with a capability to establish quickly and tolerate wear, could particularly benefit football and rugby applications. After successful trials at a number of top football venues during 2011, BAR 7 RPR has now been launched as an added option to the standard mix. And with production of our new top-rated variety Barorlando in the pipeline, this popular blend is likely to take another step forward very soon!



# BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System



## Membership Benefit

Login to [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

The BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System (SMS) sponsored by Ransomes Jacobson has been developed to provide:

- All golf clubs with Golf Industry Standard Risk Assessments.
- All golf clubs with a SMS tailored to their needs.
- Golf Club Managers with practical help to meet their legal obligations.

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- It gives protection to employees and senior management.

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- Prevent avoidable accidents.
- Meet the best standards of the golf industry.
- Reduce the costs.

The new, updated, Safety Management System (SMS) has been available to BIGGA and GCMA members since mid January. The original SMS will no longer be accessible to members from 30 April 2012.

### STORED RISK PROFILES

To ensure that you have downloaded your stored Risk Profiles you will have to follow these steps:

1. Login to the Members area of the BIGGA website.
2. Click on Member Resources.
3. Select Safety Management System website.
4. Click on the button 'Click here to visit the older site'.
5. Click on the Login/Register tab at the bottom of the page.
6. Insert your user name (email address) and password.
7. Select the Risk Profile area that you wish to view.
8. When the Risk Profile is visible select the 'Click here to Download' option at the top right of the page.
9. The Risk Profile for the selected area will have saved to your selected download area.
10. Repeat steps 7, 8 and 9 for each Risk Profile area.

As you may not remember your username and password, they will be emailed to the address that is registered on the SMS website.

The new SMS does not feature the facility to store the Risk Profile online. All of the documents (Risk Profile and Risk Assessments) are downloadable so that they can be saved to your own computer, a memory stick or printed out and filed away. You do not require a password (other than the login details to enter the Library on the website).

### HAZARD REFERENCES

To transfer the information to the new SMS you will need to re-code your hazard references on your Risk Assessments and Risk Profiles. To do this:

#### Risk Profiles

Download the Risk Profiles from the old SMS (as described above 1 - 9).

#### Hazards

As part of the review, Hazards have been re-coded e.g. Hazard 'A' across all seven areas (Greenkeeping Activities, Maintenance Facility, Golf Course, Clubhouse, Kitchen, Pro Shop and Fire Safety) is Hazardous Substances where appropriate.



To check how the new hazards are coded, download the Excel document at the end of each hazard page eg 4. Clubhouse – Old to New Hazards.

Both Risk Assessments and Risk Profiles can be updated with the new hazard references as part of your regular review process over the coming months.



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## Section Notes

Please email your notes to  
[scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)  
by the 5th  
of the month

All the latest news from your Section

# Around The Green



## Scottish Region



### East

Well just back from Harrogate BTME and what a show it was, 800 up on the Tuesday and more than 1000 up on the Wednesday, good attendances you would have to say. It seemed that every corner, even in the town, had a greenkeeper to speak to.

Stewart Ferguson, Robbie Murdoch, George Oliver, and I attended the AGM, and it seems like the way forward will have a lot of discussion behind it. Remember any questions or queries you may have about any BIGGA matters can be taken up with myself, or even Mr Stuart Greenwood, our new Scottish representative on the Board.

The Section committee will meet in mid February and get this year's diary complete, with hopefully some new ideas coming from our new committee members there to discuss.

Other than BTME lately there has been very little happening within the Section to speak of, but be sure to let me know if there is anything you wish to put in this column for the magazine.

Stewart Crawford  
[s.crawford@live.co.uk](mailto:s.crawford@live.co.uk)



### Ayrshire

The Ayrshire Section golf outing was held at Turnberry recently. A fantastic venue, but not such fantastic weather. This resulted in a much lower turn

out than usual, but we all set out on a very windy but fairly dry afternoon after enjoying a hot bacon roll and coffee in the clubhouse. Things were pretty tough but the Weather Gods decided to play their strongest hand when we were all at the farthest and highest point on the golf course - even wilder winds accompanied by torrential rain lasting for about twenty minutes. It says a lot about us greenkeepers that not one person gave in, everyone just getting their heads down and plodding on, water running out of everything. It also says a lot for the golf course, as there was not a puddle in sight on any of the greens during this spell. The strong wind continued for the rest of the round but was at least helping to dry us out a little.

After a very fulfilling high tea and some refreshments in the clubhouse the presentation of prizes was carried out by George and Derek, who conveyed the thanks of all the participants to the catering and bar staff for looking after us so well, the Turnberry Resort Management for the courtesy of the course, and in particular Ewan and his greenkeeping team for providing such good playing conditions, especially at this time of year.

The prize winners were as follows: Harry Diamond Trophy for best Spring and Autumn aggregate, George Morrison (for the second time). First class handicap: 1. Derek Wilson; 2. David Nelson; 3. George Morrison; 4. Willie McMeiken. Second class handicap: 1. John Wilson; 2. Stewart Clayton; 3. Ewan Grant; 4. Gareth Rogers. I haven't mentioned the scores because just completing the round was challenge enough.

That's it for this month, by the time you read this the Ayrshire AGM will have passed and my stand in duty with this report may be over, but please let me know any news regarding people, places and happenings

in the Ayrshire greenkeeping area for inclusion in the next magazine, and I will ensure it is passed on.

All the best,  
Duncan Gray



### Central

Congratulations to Paul Murphy who has gained the position of Golf Courses Manager with the Fife Golf Trust, responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the seven courses previously under the auspices of Fife Council.

The Section was hoping to put on a practical course on irrigation troubleshooting in March but due to work commitments this has had to be postponed until later in the year. We hope to see a good turnout of members at the evening talk by James Cobb on native tree selection and planting at the training room at Elmwood GC on Wednesday, March 21. The details for the Spring outing at Craig Craighead, on April 17, and the 2012 Pairs' competition will be emailed out to everyone shortly and an entry form will be available on the website [www.biggacentralsection.org.uk](http://www.biggacentralsection.org.uk) for members to print off. These are the only methods we shall be using to notify members. St Andrews Links and GEO are staging a seminar on Environmental issues in the Scores Hotel, St Andrews, on April 26. More details to follow.

Finally, thanks to the many companies and individuals who have again sponsored our website. Their names appear on the site and clicking on their logo takes you directly to their own websites.

Gordon Moir



### West

As the festive period has passed and we are all busy completing the work we were unable to do prior to Christmas due to the rainfall I hope we can look forward to a better few months over the coming period. I write this note with heavy frost conditions prevailing outside allowing drainage works to progress and the course is open for play instead of the constant rumblings of when will the course be open and I've never seen the course so wet. Last year was my heaviest rainfall ever in the last 12 years of recording at over 1600mm beating my previous figure by over a 100mm. So to all in the West I wish you well as the rest of the country don't fully appreciate how bad it has been. I hope this season will be dry for a change and the future of the golf industry picks up slightly.

Well what's been happening is very little really but I do have a couple of things to mention. Symbio ran a small seminar on January 18 discussing the benefits of embracing soil biology and over 15 people attended with delivery of the subject being given by Graham O'Connor and Paul Lowe. I was unable to attend due to dealing with fallen timber but it appears to have been very informative to all those who attended and I would like to thank Symbio for helping to stimulate conversation on the subject.

Harrogate was the next thing on the agenda and I saw numerous faces at the show and conference which was very exciting to see - a lot of old acquaintances were made and some new ones, but it was nice to see so many in attendance over the three

day period. The exhibitions were first class and the talks I attended were extremely busy and informative, so well done BIGGA. The staff at head office were always there to help and I had the chance to meet up with the new CEO and listen to his views for the future.

Up and coming events are the Scottish Conference on March 6 and the spring outing which you will be notified about in the coming weeks, please remember to inform me of any small interesting items for the future months. You can contact me on 0141-942-5554 or 07790823914 or by e-mail on [stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com](mailto:stuart.taylor@glasgowgolfclub.com)

Here's to a good summer,  
Stuart Taylor



## Northern

I would like to start this month off with the weather and how frosty it's been for the last month. So winter has finally arrived but we can't complain to much as the snow has been to a minimum so far. There has been some movement in the Section, which see Scott Davidson, from Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, move to Newmachar Golf Club as Deputy Head Greenkeeper and we wish him all the best and I am sure he will do a great job.

That leads me to the next part of the Section news in which George Mitchell has had his operation and everything has gone well, and I wish him a speedy return to work.

On a final note I would like to speak about Harrogate Week, which was a great experience, and it was good to meet with my fellow greenkeepers and also catch up with a few familiar faces that I had not seen from my college days. I would encourage anybody thinking about going next year to make the trip because it's very worthwhile. Also, I am led to believe that there were two people who had a different train journey this year to previous ones, but I am sure they will rectify that next year.

Ross Macrae  
Mobile: 07588896635

## Northern Region



### North West

Hi all, Just a couple of things to wrap up from last month's notes; the Richard Campey sponsored Bert Cross Memorial Trophy, from Wilmslow GC I didn't mention the Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin winners so well done to Eddie Ainsworth (LD), from Avroe GC, and Craig Morris (NP), from Fairhaven GC.

As you read this month's notes summer is well and truly just around the corner, although it has rained every day for five weeks in December and January followed by four days of frost, course closures must be high in the North West.

It is now mid March and the pressure will be starting to mount from our members to get that quick start to the season we all desire! And a small matter of Augusta is a couple of weeks away. Do we dive in early with a feed on the greens, tees and aprons and hope for the best weather wise or do we wait and potentially fall behind on all of those questions going around your mind?

Gut feeling is a tremendous part of greenkeeping. So, as those Sales Reps start to build up at your door, just remember it is your course and you live and die by your decisions! So as that Rep tries to sell you the latest product that will make your course the best in the area, ask him a couple of questions back. Drag him onto your course, show him your concerns, if you have any, and ask him for solutions, just remember a "Special offer" is only Special if it works for you!

Harrogate is a distant memory, except as I pen this it was only last week and very fresh in my mind. It is great to spend a couple of days catching up with people who you may not see from one year to the next). Apart from my staff, who always arrive on the Wednesday and stay until Thursday and who keep dragging me to Hales Bar for a drink (I wonder why?) Well the ones who can last past 9 o'clock.

The final part of the fixture list

for this seasons tournaments has now been completed and will be with you soon, if it doesn't arrive please contact me and I will sort you one. Anyway, here are the places and dates for your dairy: Spring. Leasowe GC, April 12 (TBC); Summer. Stand GC, July 4 (TBC); Autumn, Penwortham GC, September 19; Winter. Bert Cross Memorial – Wilmslow, November 22 (inc AGM)

Not a bad set of golf courses so please try your best to support your Section and hopefully I will see you at one of the above events if not all of them! And remember any news of people leaving the area or people joining our area please let me know!

See you at Leasowe GC,  
Spencer Lloyd-Pye  
[spencer@lloyd-pye.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:spencer@lloyd-pye.freeserve.co.uk)



### Northern

Yet again I sit looking out of my window and it's snowing!

So glad I gave the Saturday Stableford comp at Baildon a miss today. The golf course was still frozen, yet 30 or so still went out and played... must be bonkers! I love my golf but there is a limit, so I am sat in my front room watching sky sports news, loaded up with snacks and goodies, no kids until tea time... bliss.

So, I hope you all enjoyed the show this year, for me it had a freshness to it and a good buzz all round, so many old mates to chat to but not enough time in the day!

I'm afraid not much to tell you this month, the golf days are all booked and confirmed and tee times sorted too... Easingwold, April 25, 10am;

Scarcroft, June 27, 1.30pm; Horsforth, Aug 22, 1pm; Ogdens, Sept 26, 10am; Bracken gill, Dec 12, 10am

So guys the President's Day, at Scarcroft, and Invitation Day, at Horsforth, are afternoon starts, we can put in a shift and still make it, so hoping for a good turn out!

Andy Slingsby,  
07506407867  
[slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com](mailto:slingsbyfamily@virginmedia.com)

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## North Wales

Spring is around the corner with lengthening days and warmer temperatures, I'm sure even the grumpiest of us must be finding it easier to get up in the mornings.

Stu Yarwood MG went to the GCSAA show in Las Vegas as part of the BIGGA Delegation sponsored by Bernhards in February; I hope he found it very educational and will be willing to share his experiences with us, perhaps at a Section seminar in the not too distant future.

The new Section committee held its first meeting in the beginning of February and while I can't give anything away at the moment, I know there are some very bright ideas being raised along the lines of future education and training seminars, watch this space as they are rolled out.

As a Section may I also make an appeal for venues to host our golf days in 2013, and also venues for educational purposes for 2012/2013, we always appreciate it when clubs give us a venue as it isn't always easy to fit us in on their busy schedules.

The coach did run to Harrogate in January, with 20 passengers. We will endeavour to let you know earlier next year so we can make this trip even more successful.

The Spring Tournament isn't that far away with it being held on my stomping ground at the Vale of Llangollen golf club on April 25, the usual format is an individual Stableford and National Championship qualifier. The competition entry forms and fixture lists should already be with you if not don't worry they're on their way.

On March 6 and 7, in conjunction with Osman Groundcare, there is an educational and factory visit to Textron, in Ipswich. Places are limited so it will be by invitation only.

Nick Gray, and Bathgates, are holding an evening cricket match in the summer, I know there is an interest in this sport from within our Section, we have six players already signed up to play but we do need more, if you are interested please contact me

or Nick Gray.

Please keep checking our Facebook group, North Wales bigga, for latest additions to events and news.

I think that has just about covered my scribbles for now, so, all the best until next month!

Pete Maybury. E-mail petemayb66@aol.com mobile 07756001187 or message me on Facebook.



## North East

Harrogate BTME 2012, what a show this was with record attendance, even up on the last time the big boys were there in 2010.

It's the first time I had ever seen the show busy on all three days; I am sure all the exhibitors were happy bunnies, not forgetting how busy the Education seminars etc were too.

Education - you cannot beat it, you're only going to better yourself on attending these courses.

I have been doing BTME for 19 years and I have seen greenkeepers coming back several times over the years, it just goes to show that there is life after NVQ Level 3, you don't have stop there. Get on to your Head Greenkeeper or Secretary and tell them you want to continue to learn. Having said that, it was good to see Head Greenkeeper, Martin Wood, and Andrew Wright, of The Bedlingtonshire GC, as they were both on a two-day course. And last but not least thanks to all the North East Section members who called in at the stand I was helping out on.

As I had mentioned in January's magazine I told you that Tyneside Golf Club had in the renowned Dutch Architect, Frank Pont, to change the bunkers at the 1st and 18th holes. Well they are now finished and what a difference it has made to these holes, when playing the 1st you can now see all the bunkers from the tee box.

It's been clarified that further work will be done on other holes at Tyneside next autumn.

The spring comp South Shields GC, on April 18, tee off 11 to 11-30.

Jimmy Richardson



## Sheffield

Welcome everyone and welcome to March.

The month when all the hard work is over and winter falls into place, and preparations begin for our upcoming seasons. I'm sure many of you will be ready for coring and tickling your greens and courses into tip-top shape. The relatively mild winter we have had will, I'm sure, have helped us look after our greens and courses over the winter months, and helped us in our upcoming work.

I'm sure that all of you who attended our recent lecture will have had a very enlightening day and left Rotherham full of ideas and new thoughts to help yourself and stimulate those around you. We at Sheffield Section will be looking to develop our partnership with Myerscough College and introduce a better standard of lecture and educational events for our members. Hopefully all members will endeavour to attend these events and encourage their staff to attend, as we are all capable of learning something new.

I haven't spoke to you all since our AGM and as predicted we didn't find a replacement for our Treasurer who has kindly offered to stay in the position till a replacement can be found. If anyone is interested or would like to recommend anyone, then please get in touch. All other Committee members carried on their roles for the upcoming year.

The Committee is busy organising for 2012 and fixture cards will be delivered soon. We are also working on several ideas/projects to improve the Section for members and to improve the capabilities of the Section.

That's all from me for now. Good luck for March and don't be too hard on those greens they will get there in the end.

James Stevens  
07738719614

## Section Notes

Please email your notes to  
[scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)  
by the 5th of the month

## Midland Region



## East Midlands

Late February saw our annual, Toro sponsored, Go-Karting event held at Wymeswold. Stefan Carter, from Forest Hill Golf Club, was the 2011 champion and, assuming his hair didn't get caught under the wheels, he was a hot favourite for this year's event too. Other pre-race questions that were floating around the pit area were: would Gary Thurman have finished his lap allocation from last year? And, would Ben Cumberland be sporting a new matching helmet and race suit this year with 'Please feel free to barge me into the side' emblazoned across his back? These questions will be answered in April's Magazine along with the results and other highlights.

All East Midlands members should now have received their invites to Scraftoft Golf Club for the East Midlands Spring Competition. If for some reason you haven't, or you know someone who wants to play, then please either ring/text me or email the Secretary at [biggaeastmid@gmail.com](mailto:biggaeastmid@gmail.com). Don't forget that there is only one competition this year to qualify through the Section for the National Championship in October, and Scraftoft gives you the opportunity to have your entry fee paid for and for you to follow in the footsteps of Paul Frith and Derek McJannett, our recent National Champions from the Region.

I have two personal notes to mention this month, firstly I would like to thank Pete Smith, who stood down as Chairman of The East Midlands Section at the beginning of February, for all his hard work and effort over the last couple of years. Pete is one of the most enthusiastic and passionate greenkeepers who I have ever met and I do hope that he is able to continue supporting the Section with our golf days and social events. Secondly I would like to congratulate Kenny Mackay on his appointment at Wentworth. Kenny continues to be a great influence on my career



and has always encouraged the progress of committed and driven greenkeepers within the industry. I sincerely wish him well with the challenge that lies ahead at Wentworth.

So, all cylinders have been reground, all filters have been changed, all winter servicing is complete and greenkeepers across the country are preparing themselves for the smell of freshly cut grass in their nostrils. British summertime begins on the 25th of this month and then the season should really start to kick off. The mild winter for the vast majority of us has made this winter seem very short, and with the exception of the cold snap at the start of February there has been a steady level of growth enabling some recovery from the winter wear and tear. Fingers crossed we get a good flush of spring growth, something that we severely lacked in 2011, which would set everyone up nicely for the coming season.

This of course is our greenkeeping utopia, which we have no control over, but we live in hope.

Happy Greenkeeping!  
Greg Skinner  
07970 095264



## Midland

As I sit here in February with snow and freezing conditions all around, I am heartened by the fact that I am writing March's notes, and such can only mean that spring should be well on its way. Fingers crossed ay! As we are on the subject of spring, our thoughts are concerned with the repair and reinstatement of damaged areas from the preceding winter's play. Luckily this month's calendar sponsor is Matt Gresty, Amenity Grass Seed Specialist. Tel: 07767 278335 or 0121 458 6646. Email: matthew.gresty@limagrains.co.uk. Please consider Matt for all your seed requirements, our thanks to him for his continued support of our Section.

Spring of course also brings the beginning of our new golfing

season for 2012, and I find the Tournament Programme Card invaluable in sourcing information regarding upcoming golfing dates and educational events, our thanks to Headland Amenity for sponsoring such ([www.headlandamenity.com](http://www.headlandamenity.com) <<http://www.headlandamenity.com>>). Our first event is to be held at The Chase Golf Club on May 23 with tee times from 12:30. Please get your entries into Gary A.S.A.P. The format is to remain as Stableford scoring system, one I only recently learnt the origin of while sitting in the dentist's waiting room reading anything to keep my mind of the inevitable scaffold pole injection within my head. Such was devised by Dr. Frank Stableford and first used for official competition in 1932.

Also at the Spring event the long running and very successful Everris Doubles competition (re-named from Scotts) will be drawn. The date and fixture for the final is yet to be arranged, but I'm sure such will be in keeping with the prestige prior years of excellence has afforded us. For further information and entry forms please visit our web site: [www.biggamidlandsection.co.uk](http://www.biggamidlandsection.co.uk) <<http://www.biggamidlandsection.co.uk>>.

Now I come to some lovely news to finish, after too many a year, I recently received a text from my old mate Steve Wenlock, from North Worcester GC, informing me that he and his lovely wife Emma now have three children; Josh, Kieran, and new daughter, Millie. Congratulations to you both, I look forward to seeing you in the spring, the little ones will love the butterfly farm, or will we be fly fishing? I doubt it.

Sean McDade



## B, B & O

Spring cannot be far around the corner, although as I write this we are literally snowed under! It seems winter has returned with a vengeance. I'm sure many of you will be thankful that the golf courses have been given some brief rest bite

following a busy period since the start of the year, despite pressure from members and owners to open. With this in mind it won't be long until attention turns to formulating and preparing spring maintenance programmes as we gear up for the season ahead. Hopefully courses have suffered little disease in comparison to previous winters and spring will get off to a flying start.

By all accounts Harrogate Week was a success with good numbers reported. Hopefully many of you got to experience the week and all that was on offer.

Congratulations must go to Andrew Thrift, who has left Newbury and Crookham after four years, to take over as Course Manager at Donnington Valley, where he replaces Alistair Higgs who has taken on the reins at Windlesham Golf Club. Michael Cox, formerly of Donnington Valley, has stepped in to become Deputy at Newbury working alongside Alec MacIndoe. We wish all of you the best as you take on your news roles and challenges.

Dates and venues for this year's Section events will be confirmed next month. The format will follow last year's schedule: Spring and Summer meetings, plus the Turkey Trot. Last year's golf days were well attended and we hope to see many of you again this year. Invites and information will be emailed out rather than posted in an attempt to curb costs. If you wish to receive news and or any information regarding golf days and all section events then please send your email address and details to Matt Nutter: [bbosecretray@gmail.com](mailto:bbosecretray@gmail.com). The Section website has been updated and now features the latest jobs from around the area.

The BIGGA Midland Regional Conference is being held at Frilford Heath Golf Club on March 29. The theme of the day is 'Construction and Weather its Ecologically Sound'. An impressive line up of speakers include: BIGGA CEO, Jim Croxton; Mark Hunt, of Headland; Les Howkins, Course Manager at the Richmond GC; Dr Keith Duff, and Cameron McMillan, from Queenwood. Hopefully many of you will be able to make it along for what promises to be

## Assistant Profile

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

**Name:** Barry McCulloch  
**Age:** 31  
**Club:** Whitecraigs Golf Club  
**Position:** Assistant Greenkeeper  
**Nickname:** Beebes



- 1. How long have you been greenkeeping?** 14 years
- 2. What was it about the career that attracted you?** Different tasks everyday.
- 3. If you weren't a greenkeeper what do you think you'd be?** Mechanic or a Joiner.
- 4. Which task do you most enjoy doing and why?** Hand cutting greens, because of the instant result.
- 5. Which task do you least enjoy doing and why?** Diving fairways in the rain, it feels like its never ending.
- 6. What one thing - other than a pay rise - would improve the greenkeepers' lot?** For greenkeepers to receive the recognition they deserve.
- 7. Hobbies?** Golf, Football, Socialising.
- 8. Favourite Band?** Coldplay.
- 9. Which team do you support (football or otherwise)?** Glasgow Celtic.
- 10. What is your claim to fame?** My wedding pictures were in a magazine

## Are you an Assistant Greenkeeper?

To appear in this column email [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk) or ring 01347 833800 Option 510



# Around The Green

an interesting and informative day. Again information/application forms can be found on the section website and will be emailed out to 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](mailto:bboscribe@gmail.com). Alternatively keep up to date with what is happening in the BB&O section by following us on Twitter, Facebook and the web site: [www.bbogreenkeepers.co.uk](http://www.bbogreenkeepers.co.uk)



## Surrey

Sunday February 5. "Hello and g'day possums". Yes, I did go and see Dame Edna in Dick Whittington at the Wimbledon Theatre and he/she was very, very funny: "Oh no he wasn't. Oh yes he was".

Dick was not the normal long legged girl in men's clothing but this Dick was a guy.

The first snow of 2012 fell last night and I imagine most of Surrey's golf clubs were closed. My other part time job as a starter at St George's Hill GC was not required, so I was able to concentrate on refurbishing my new home in Dorking. The property is only five minutes walk from the High Street and apart from being in close proximity to a certain member of our committee we are very pleased with the new chateau 'Willmott'. My little accident, while on a ladder repairing the garage roof, resulted in a bloody head, a sprained wrist and a black and blue left buttock. Be not concerned for I am well on the mend but it does make one realise, OAP's should stay on terra firma. I couldn't take my own advice and was up and finished the job a few days later.

Enough of Dorking, let's talk Isle of Wight. Yes it's still there and so were we for the New Year. I am told that I danced and drank the night away and that observers of my Cha Cha Cha are recommending my appearing on Bruce's programme with a suitably under dressed, young and nubile member of the opposite sex. That, on reflection, could be more dangerous than

being up a ladder but I'd still give it a go.

Lee Gatland, Course Manager at Banstead GC, is the only member to contact me with a news titbit and even that is out of date, but I am grateful to report on the birth of Daisy, 7lb 4ozs, on November 2, 2011. Congratulations to Katie and Lee from Surrey Greenkeepers.

Lingfield Park GC is hosting a PGA Euro Pro Tour event, and Course Manager, Kevin Weller, mobile 07814012533, needs volunteers from qualified greenkeepers to assist him. Free accommodation and food from April 29 to May 4. They also get a PGA jacket and shirt.

Brian Willmott  
[Brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Brian.willmott@hotmail.co.uk)



## Kent

If you have managed to avoid the snow that we have at the time of writing this then you are very lucky! Hopefully it will soon clear and the course management teams can get to work on preparing the courses for the coming season. At least we can see a pattern developing with the seasons now with snow in February becoming a regular feature. This should allow us to prepare ourselves, and our club finances for the worst.

Many of you will have taken advantage of the winter period to catch up on your own CPD's and staff training. We are very fortunate to have Hadlow College providing regular free seminars to all BIGGA members and I hope many of you were able to take full advantage, many thanks to John Millen for organising these evenings for us.

You should all now be in receipt of our season's fixture list, which we circulated at the AGM last year, and notice that our first event is at North Foreland Golf Club on March 28. This is one course that never fails to impress, as I'm sure many of you would agree. Hopefully Dan McGrath MG will have picked up some tips on his recent trip to the GCSAA show in Vegas as part of the BIGGA Delegation

to further enhance his course. Full details of the day's agenda will be on the website by now so please do your best to come along and enjoy the course and the company. Please respond to the e-mail invitation to let us know if you are able to attend.

Many thanks to those companies who have offered sponsorship for our coming year, we really appreciate the help you all provide.

Please remember to visit our webpage for more up to date news and views and don't forget we have a forum there for you to leave any comments or questions.

Best of British  
Rob Holland



## London

Hello to all members, and when you read this I do hope we have moved into spring and are starting to see some growth so we can start to shape our courses for another season.

For my sins I have taken over from Matt Plested for writing this monthly around the green, so any information you members may have please let me know.

The London Section had its winter meeting/AGM at Old Fold Manor back in early December, so I would like to thank Ian Semple, Course Manager, for presenting the golf course so well on the day, and congratulate the Finchley team on winning who were well lead by their Course Manager Craig Newton, his two assistants and just a little help from yours truly, and I also thank Old Fold Manor for hosting the day. Once the food and prize giving was complete, it was straight into the AMG which was a long drawn out affair. The following committee members were selected to serve the section, and, apart from me, the committee serving you are young and enthusiastic. So, your committee and their contact details are as follows:

Matt Plested [Muswell Hill] Chairman, [matt.plested@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:matt.plested@hotmail.co.uk) 07818410333

Adam McColl [Crews Hill] Secretary [adamccoll@hotmail.com](mailto:adamccoll@hotmail.com) 07886513975

Robert Phillips [Sandy Lodge] Treasurer/website [robert.phillips1@btconnect.com](mailto:robert.phillips1@btconnect.com) 07785791700

Lee Cox [Mill Hill] Golf Organiser/facebook/Twitter [l.cox15@btinternet.com](mailto:l.cox15@btinternet.com) 07931927346

John Wells [South herts] Education/Magazine [j.wells1@sky.com](mailto:j.wells1@sky.com) 07952956857

The committee are keen to improve communications so members are better informed and become more involved in Education and golf. The section will have a website by the end of April, we now just have group on Facebook (Bigga London) and are also on twitter (@BiggaLondon).

The next event is the spring meeting at Stanmore GC on May 24 (sponsored by A T Oliver), this is the qualifying event for the BIGGA National Championship and Barry has promised that the course will be in good playing order! This will be followed by the summer meeting at Crews Hill in early August (date to be confirmed) so you will be sent an entry form or you can email Lee on the above email address.

I will be running some Education meetings from October to March and this will be shown in a future article, any members with ideas on training can contact me, or any of the other committee members as we are keen to run a varied course of training to help develop staff and help them manage to a higher level.

John Wells

## South West and South Wales Region



### South West

Harrogate week...what can I say (that I can get away with...). We all know how good the show was, we all know that the numbers were brilliant and those of us who did the education seminars know how amazing and well organised they were! I'm not going to drag on about Harrogate week too much, because as you've scanned through the magazine you'll