Over the past few months there has been a lot of discussion about education, particularly triggered by the extraordinary decision by the EGU to withdraw its funding for the GTC. I hope by the time you read these notes much will have been resolved in this area.

What is needed, is for the GTC to become a strong independent body, properly constituted and with the constituent bodies including BIGGA working in harmony and effectively, to take the training of greenkeepers to higher levels. The crisis caused by the EGU presents us all with the opportunity to do just that. The GTC has made great strides in implementing N/SVQs, which is the foundation. We now have over 1000 students at Level 3, based on doing the tasks in the N/SVQs. We now have over 100 students at Level 4, who are looking to go on to Level 4. This includes over 100 Assessors with D32 - 33 qualifications. Not bad, for what one gentleman recently referred to us as just grass cutters.

Education like all structures must have a sound foundation and N/SVQs provide that foundation. Some will say there is not enough technical training, but what is wrong with HNC, which can be taken on a distance learning programme. Also, BIGGA has a big part to play at this level through its Management Courses, Conference and Seminars, and if you wish to go for the highest level why not enroll for the Master Greenkeepers Certificate? There are 104 students at Level 3 and 20 having gained their Certificates. BIGGA Management Courses at Aldwark and out in the regions are on average taken up by around 400 each year. If you wish to have information on the 1999 - 2000 courses they will be ready in May, so write or phone Ken or Sami to be put on the mailing list.

Chairman

Expand your horizons

Gordon Child