Clive visits latest Golden Key supporters

BIGGA Chairman, Clive Ogrood, caught up with the Association's two newest Golden Key members, the Stoke Park Club and AGCO to present them with their plaques. He travelled first to Stoke Poges to make the presentation to Alex Miller, the Estate Director (left) and Hartford King, the Managing Director of Stoke Park outside the famous clubhouse before making a similar presentation to Tim Lawrence, AGCO's Sales Manager - Grounds Care during Saltex.

"We are delighted to have the support of both of these companies and the money they donate to the Education and Development Fund will go a long way to making our proposed educational projects a reality," said Clive.

The Stakeholder Pension Scheme

John Pemberton, BIGGA's Administration and Finance Manager gives some important information about company pension schemes.

As you may be aware most employers with five or more employees must, by law, offer a Stakeholder Pension arrangement to their staff after October 8 of this year.

Employees can choose whether or not to join the scheme. BIGGA has a solution that could be of assistance to you and your club.

Stakeholder Pension have been introduced by the Government to encourage people to provide financially for their own retirement through a low cost savings scheme.

A Stakeholder Pension is a savings fund that belongs to the individual. The Government encourages savings into the fund by proving tax incentives. A gross contribution of £100 actually costs £78 after tax relief at standard rate. Anyone below normal pension age, working or not, can invest up to £3,600 gross each year, the contributions can be invested in a range of different funds to suit the savers requirements. Contributions can be as little as £20 per month. On retirement the fund is used to provide an income for life. There is usually also an opportunity to take part of the fund as a tax free cash sum.

The advantage of the Stakeholder pension over other plans is that there is no initial charge. The annual charge is limited to a maximum of 1% per year and there are no other charges. There are no penalties for stopping or changing contributions and there is also no penalty for switching the pension fund to another provider.

To fulfill the legal requirements an employer must offer a scheme but does not have to make a contribution, although many employers may choose to do so. The main duty of the employer is to deduct contributions from wages and pay the pension provider the premium within fixed time limits.

BIGGA has enlisted the help of an Independent Financial Adviser, Walsh Lucas and Co of York, and chosen Standard Life as a preferred provider. Standard Life is one of the world's leading mutual financial services companies whose mutual status is a key to their success. Walsh Lucas and Co has been known to BIGGA for several years and has the expertise to provide the additional financial advice that will be required by many Clubs and members.

Arrangements have been made that any member of BIGGA or employer of a Club joining the scheme can have free independent financial advice over the telephone. Anyone wishing to join the scheme can also do so by telephone.

Further details are available from Geoff Steel of Walsh Lucas and Co. 33 Micklegate, York Y01 6WE. Tel: 01904 610495

Andrew and Ian receive special medals

Andrew Wood and Ian Smith have each been awarded a special medal by the City & Guilds in recognition of the high standard of work they have achieved during their studies. These awards only go to one in every 3,000 people.

Andrew is studying NVQ Level 3 Sports Turf Maintenance at Plumpton College while Ian, who is now at Mentmore Golf and Country Club, is studying for his National Certificate in Greenkeeping at Oaklands College.

Pictured are: Andrew, centre, and Ian, right, with Ian Merrick, Curriculum Team Leader at Oakland College.