With Christmas fast approaching, Sami and I are working hard to clear our desks before the Festive Break. At the end of a busy year, we can look back at a great deal of success, seeing far more greenkeepers entering formal and informal education and training, at least one new Master Greenkeeper joining the group of 32 and the continuing successful co-operation between BIGGA and the GTC. The end of the year does not mean the end of our work, however, and we have been working hard to bring you the education and training opportunities that you have asked for.

Continue to Learn

Continue to Learn, the largest education and training event for greenkeepers, Golf Course Managers, Golf Course Superintendents, Golf Club Managers and fine turf experts will be held from 20 to 23 January 2003, in Harrogate.

Starting with the Workshop Programme, Education Conference and the STRI - Running Golf Courses in the 21st Century. The programme has something for everyone. Moreover, with flexible access, delegates have more choices than ever.

Learn how to hire, fire and manage staff at the Conference on Monday 20 January, discover the latest golf course management techniques on the second day or gain an insight into the intricacies of golf course management at the STRI Managing Golf Course in the 21st Century Conference on Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 January. Together with workshops on Soil Science, Environmental Management, Golf Course Design and the Master Greenkeeper Scheme, the first two days of Continue to Learn, supported by John Deere, have something for everyone.

Tuesday 21 January sees the start of the BTME and ClubHouse Exhibitions which include, for the first time, a Careers Fair, supported by TORO, where you can access information on careers in greenkeeping and golf course management, golf club management, further and higher education, professional golf, agronomy, machinery sales and maintenance, and the chemical industry. Add the always popular Careers Clinic and this stand in Hall Q is a must for all delegates to both the BTME and ClubHouse Exhibitions.

Another first for January 2003 is the introduction of an Education and Training stand in Hall M, where you can book your Seminar session, watch a demonstration of OnCourse Golf Course Management software, check on the availability of training in your Region, collect a copy of the BIGGA Field Guides or discuss your education and training plan.

The BTME/ClubHouse Seminars will be held in the Royal Hall. Following suggestions from previous delegates, we have introduced several changes that should make the experience even better. We intend to improve the seating by increasing leg room, however, this will mean less seats so book early. Each session costs a maximum of £5 with several session completely free of charge. Each session will be ‘stand alone’ and the Hall will be cleared at the end of each session. Sessions are concentrated around the middle of the day, allowing delegates plenty of time to visit both shows.

If you have not received details of Continue to Learn then contact Sami or myself at BIGGA House. Remember, the deadline for all Continue to Learn bookings is 8 January 2003.

Regional Training

This Autumn and Winter Regional Training Courses are almost complete but there is still time to book your place onto a course in the Spring. Places are available on the following courses:

February 11 & 12
Chainsaw Maintenance and Croscutting
Stirling

February 12 & 13
The New Supervisor
Newark Golf Club

February 19 & 20
Further Management Skills
Manchester Airport

February 19 & 20
Basic Computer Skills
Old Fold Manor GC

February 26
Abrasive Wheels
De Vere Carden Park

February 26 & 27
Further Management Skills
Luton Airport

March 4 & 5
Further Computer Skills
Berkhamsted GC

March 4 & 5
Project Management
Ross on Wye GC

March 4 & 5
Coaching Skills
Potters Bar GC

March 4 & 5
Management Skills for Course Managers
De Vere Carden Park

March 4 & 5
Presenting a Professional Image
De Vere Carden Park

April 16 & 17
Budgets and Finance
De Vere Carden Park

Each one day course costs £30 + VAT and each two day course costs £60 + VAT. Remember that Golden Key Companies are offering £30 training vouchers to their customers.
OnCourse

BIGGA has been joined by Cobalt Concepts to sell OnCourse Golf Course Management software in the UK. Selling for just over a year in the UK the OnCourse Management package is now being used at 10 golf courses and at 14 colleges. Designed by greenkeepers for greenkeepers, the package has a range of facilities to help you to manage your golf course including:
- Staff Records
- Time Sheets
- Supplier Database
- Machinery Inventory and Service information
- Stock Inventory
- Golf Course Details
- Golf Course Maintenance
- Diary of Events
- Budgets and Finance
- Report Generation

Each module links to all other modules and updates any changes. For further information, contact me at BIGGA House or visit the BIGGA of OnCourse.

Free Money for Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has launched a pilot scheme to help small businesses to improve their health and safety standards. It aims to help plug the Health and Safety gap by providing businesses with matched funding of up to £1000. The Small Firms Assistance Scheme is open to those thinking of starting a new business and small companies with fewer than 10 employees. Companies must have an annual turnover not exceeding £4,500,000 or an annual balance sheet not exceeding £3,200,000. Pilot areas are West Yorkshire, Essex and Devon and Cornwall. For further information contact the local Business Link:
- West Yorkshire 0113 3837733
- Essex 01245 241400
- Devon and Cornwall 0845 6009966.

Liaison Officers

The GTC is still looking for liaison officers. The Role of Liaison Officers is to:
- Liaise with GTC Headquarters on any matters affecting greenkeepers training
- Be the GTC representative within designated areas of the country, to visit Training Provider Centres twice each year and communicate with greenkeeping lecturers and students.
- To attend liaison meetings at Training Provider Centres
- To act as a GTC advisor.
- To co-ordinate moderation meetings for assessors.
- To attend annual update meetings at GTC HQ.

Liaison Officers are still required in the following areas:
- Cumbria and Lancashire: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire; Devon and Cornwall; Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk; Dorset; Gloucestershire and Wiltshire; Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire; Leicestershire and Northamptonshire; Shropshire and Herefordshire; Bedfordshire; Cheshire and Isle of Man and Warwickshire and Worcestershire

These are part-time posts and attract payment of £12 per hour and 40p per mile expenses.

Anyone interested in becoming a GTC Liaison Officer should contact the GTC on 01347 838640.

Sami and Ken wish all of their readers a very Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in Harrogate next month.

How can we Progress?

Am I the only reader to see the connection between the Neil Thomas’ piece (November issue page 19) and that incredible feature on St Andrews Bay project (pages 14-18)? We note that the owner of this project, Dr Panos, laid down his prime remit that they “have to maintain the golf course with stripes and make them green”. This surely says it all! Admittedly Neil (Thomas) comments, as I have for decades, on the iniquity of those who speak their minds and expose “new golfers”. I know! It is not only head men who are wrongfully sacked (and what paltry compensation is awarded those who win wrongful dismissal claims). Whether you are a traditionalist (as I and many others are), or an opportunist prepared to prostitute science to commerce the news is that new golfer is your enemy and exposing him risks the sack. How can we progress in this atmosphere?

J. H. Arthur
Honorary Member
Budleigh Salterton