After a tiring but successful week in Harrogate, Sami and I are turning out thoughts to Continue to Learn 2004, which will be, again, supported by the John Deere Team Championship. The theme for the Harrogate week will be 'Golf, Sport and Business'. We hope to look back in time and see if things were really better 20 years ago, look at the present and the problems and pressures on the game and on greenkeepers and attempt to look forward to see what changes may occur in the next twenty years. Please let us know if you wish to see a particular speaker or subject.

We had a wide range of speakers at Harrogate in 2003, both greenkeepers and speakers from outside the Industry. We had some excellent talks and I would like to thank all those who took part. The Careers Fair was successful, in its first year, and, thanks to the support of TORO, it will be expanded and enhanced for 2004.

Watch out for further announcements in future editions of this magazine.

Greenkeeper Membership

Following a vote at the Annual General Meeting, held in Harrogate, on January 22, all those wishing to join the Association as Greenkeeper Members, after February 1, 2003, will need a minimum qualification of N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf or equivalent qualification. This change to the Constitution will not affect current members who will retain their current membership category. Anyone wishing to join the Association after February 1, 2003 who does not hold a minimum qualification of N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf or equivalent qualification will be offered membership of the Association and will be called Members, i.e. not Greenkeeper Members, until such time as they become qualified.

Non-Greenkeeper Members will pay a reduced membership fee of £10 less than the equivalent Greenkeeper Member rate. This reflects the lower recommended salaries for unqualified personnel. Additionally, Non Greenkeeper Members will not be given voting rights nor will be allowed to take up office at National, Regional or Section level.

Regional Training

There are still some places left on the Spring Series of Regional Training Courses. However, due to lack of support, we have had to cancel some courses. Courses with places still available are:

The New Supervisor
Further Management Skills
Abrasive Wheels

Further Management Skills
Further Computer Skills
Project Management
Presenting a Professional Image
Budgets and Finance

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Remember that each one day course costs £30 + VAT and each two day course costs £60 + VAT thanks to massive subsidies from the BIGGA Education and Development Fund.

BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

I have just been informed of the excellent news that two companies have agreed to sponsor the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition 2003. Following the announcement by the R&A to continue to support the Competition in 2003, Scotts UK Professional and Syngenta Professional Products have agreed, jointly, to sponsor the Competition, initially for 2003. Further detail of sponsors, sponsorship and detail of the Competition will appear in the March edition of this magazine.
Machinery and Work Equipment Training and Assessment Manual

Designed to complement the GTC Wall Chart, the Machinery and Work Equipment Assessment and Training Manual will be sent out to all BIGGA Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, later this month. Sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, the Manual has been designed to assist Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers in the training and assessment of their staff and to give each member of staff a full record of training, assessment and competence.

Many Course Managers have already been visited by Environmental Health Inspectors who have asked to see written records of training, assessment and competence. Be prepared by ensuring that all of your staff are given appropriate training and assessment of competence and that you keep full, written records.

Higher Education Scholarships supported by Ransomes Jacobsen

Several requests for Higher Education Scholarships 2003 have arrived at BIGGA House. Thanks to Ransomes Jacobsen, there are funds available to support Greenkeeper Members of BIGGA who are about to enter Higher Education (N/SVQ Level 4, HNC, HND, BSc, MSc). The closing date for applications for the academic year starting in October 2003 is 2 June 2003.

TORO Student of the Year Competition

Application forms for the TORO Student of the Year Competition have been sent to all Training Providers. Applications must be returned to BIGGA House by 9 May 2003. Regional Finals will be held in Edinburgh, Manchester, St Albans, Cheltenham and Cambridgeshire during the week commencing 30 June 2003.

Get your entry in now and you could be following Murray Long, the 2002 Winner to the United States in January 2004.