As we approach the season of goodwill and enter a New Year, maybe it is an appropriate time to just catch up with and family friends, but, also a time to consider your own personal development and how you could improve all aspects of your life?

Easier said than done you might say, during difficult times for many golf clubs and in the middle of winter but some people I know, do take stock of their situation as a New Year approaches.

One thing that January always brings for our sector is the opportunity to meet up with friends, old and new, during the Harrogate Week exhibition and Continue to Learn programme.

During the day there is so much going on with workshops and seminars available seemingly around every corner and the range of latest equipment, machinery, advice and materials for every visitor to see first hand.

In the evening the socialising starts in abundance and this is where the counselling and support network really shows its true colours and what a fantastic camaraderie there is within greengrass and groundskeeping.

So many wise words available from the more mature greengrassers present all of which you always willing to share their knowledge and experiences with the next generation.

Many of the younger Course Managers are now presenting at seminars and workshops throughout the year and they have much to be proud of, as golf course standards are not only weekly in the spotlight of TV coverage but at every site where golf is played.

I am amazed at the talent now within the industry and as BISGA celebrates its 25-year anniversary we must continue to promote all which is good about the profession and ensure the game has well trained and educated greengrassers for many years to come.

On this occasion I think we can take a break from talking about the formal education and training opportunities available through BISGA and instead focus on the various informal routes to gain new knowledge and experience to improve your lifestyle.

The Greengrasskeepers Associations from 1912 have always been the main support network for greengrassers on a local, regional and national level but in recent years with the advent of the Internet there is an incredible source for knowledge and arguably more important peer group help and guidance accessible 24/7.

The various websites and bulletin boards are an ongoing resource to share and assist with other greengrass problems.

During 2011 the GTC has hosted a series of workshops specifically aimed at assisting golf club employers understand more about the role of the Course Manager/Head Greengrass and what is involved in maintaining and managing a golf course to the highest standard possible given the budget and resources available.

More employer focused workshops are planned for the New Year covering such subjects as Health and Safety, Improving Communication within the Golf Club and more dates for the now tried and tested Chairman of Green – Secretary Manager workshops, will be announced shortly.

What is pleasing for the GTC is that the intended aim of these workshops, to improve the relationship between the employer and employee, has without doubt been achieved.

To see Greengrasskeepers, Secretaries Managers and Course Managers together at workshops where the open debate sessions are so beneficial for all delegates is very rewarding for the GTC.

So whether it is reading magazines, searching the relevant websites, attending seminars and/or workshops, attending Harrogate Week please remember you are part of an industry where there is a tremendous amount of support available.

Christmas is coming... I hope you’re all organised and have bought your Christmas presents. I do believe that leaving it too late - a can of de-ice, an iron, shampoo and a Magic Tree from the local garage are not great gifts!

On this occasion I think we can continue to make the point that many workshops are now sold out, so if you haven’t booked your place yet you might want to check the Harrogate Week website for availability. It certainly looks like the Queen’s Suite of Harrogate International Centre is going to be the place to be from January 22-26.

We are fortunate to be presenting a number of seminars from companies who are exhibiting at the trade show, these include:

- Tuesday, January 24
- Turfgrass – Turfcare
- Understanding Cutting Unit Performance – John Dore
- Activated Microbial Turf Management – Great Turf Company
- Use of Synthetic Turf in Golf – SAPCA
- Organic Matter – Friend or Foe? - Syngenta
- Perceptions in Greengrass Management – What’s Most Important? You Decide – Rannones, Jacobsen
- Tins 4 - How Will it Affect You? – New Holland

- Wednesday, January 25
- Achieving Smooth Golf Greens – Myerscough College
- The Ultimate Renovation Package – R & K Keenest
- BASIS Contribution for the Future of Amenity Industry – Sheriff Amenity
- Tier 4 – How Will it Affect You? – New Holland
- Suppression of Fusarium Patch By Phosphtol in Cool Season Grasses – Amenity Scotland
- Turfgrass - Turfcare
- Understanding Cutting Unit Performance – John Dore
- Activated Microbial Turf Management – Great Turf Company
- Use of Synthetic Turf in Golf – SAPCA
- Organic Matter – Friend or Foe? - Syngenta
- Perceptions in Greengrass Management – What’s Most Important? You Decide – Rannones, Jacobsen
- Tins 4 - How Will it Affect You? – New Holland