Following on from recent Chairman of Green workshops, I encourage all Course Managers and Greenkeepers to make their plans to attend Harrogate Week 2012 and to bring along their employers.

Once again the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate Week 2012 has something for everybody, and for many involved in golf course maintenance and management, it is the one event where they can truly bring themselves up to speed with everything, ranging from education, to what is new in technology, machinery and product development.

The GTC, in recent months, has been encouraged by the support for greenkeeper education and training it has received for hosting four EMPLOYER focused workshops around the country.

Whilst originally only scheduled as a pilot programme of three Chairman of Green workshops, ably delivered by Laurence Pittie MGI, Turf Master One, to assist the Chairman of Green understand the role of the employer, the role of the Course Manager and all aspects of golf course maintenance more dates and venues have now been added.

The GTC, with tremendous support from English Golf Union staff and volunteers from their Golf Services Committee, believe we have broken into ground in improving the relationship between the Course Manager and their employer.

We know there was some concern from certain greenkeepers regarding workshops for Chairman of Green, however, I can only report on the feedback from delegates and their Course Managers which has by far exceeded our expectations in terms of how beneficial the events have been to their relationship back at the club.

Not only are we hoping to add dates and venues for Chairman of Green and Green Consultants in Scotland and Wales but also add workshops aimed at the employers and their Course Managers in other key areas such as Health & Safety and Communications using GTU’s Quality Assured Training Providers.

For the very first workshop we had requests for Secretaries/ Course Managers and Course Managers to attend and in some cases there were representatives from one club have attended. All credit goes to Laurence for tailoring the workshops to ensure there is something for all and no topic is ‘out of bounds’.

Please visit the GTC website to view the latest workshops, dates, venues and subjects.

I won’t embarrass the Course Managers or their Chairman of Green or Secretary. Managers who have benefited from the workshops but I am sure you will see them promoting their improved relationship and appreciation of each others responsibilities in the turf and golf press very soon.

All designed to help bring about a better maintained and managed golf course.

The stories over lunch at the workshops have been enlightening and encouraging and I must share one with you:

David Golding to Chairman of Green: “Do you enjoy the morning sessions?”

Chairman of Green: “Brilliant, I wish I knew there was so much involved in greenkeeping, it has given me so much information already, I will be no able to support our Head Greenkeeper better at future Green meetings”.

David: “How long have you been a Chairman of Green?”

Chairman of Green: “Well, I played golf at my club for years and years and decided to give it a rest this year. I didn’t renew my membership.”

David: “Surely one sunny day in April I was walking the dog alongside the course and from the patio of the clubhouse I was beckoned by my old pals and six pints later, here I am, back playing golf and as a Chairman of Green!”

At last, my years of suspicion had been confirmed to one, honest, brief chat over a lunch.

Four managers the Chairman of Green position at a golf club, is the one nobody wants and so often it is a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

It is now time to give these willing or often unwilling volunteers the support, education and training they surely deserve and for one person it totally changed his perception of the work required to maintain good quality playing surfaces and the wider environment.

I know this might be an exceptional story but for many years the constant changing of the Chairman of Green has been a big problem to Course Managers.

Since the launch of the Continue to Learn education programme places have been selling fast with a few workshops full or almost full. My advice would be that if there is a workshop that you are particularly interested in attending, get your booking in quickly to guarantee your place.

Feedback on the programme has been excellent and it is our intention to smash the record for the number of attendees through the education doors that was set in January 2011.

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, encourages you to attend Harrogate Week 2012

Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development, invites you to attend Harrogate Week 2012 with an update on education issues: Monday 23 January 2012

• The Biology and Effects of Parasitic Nematodes in Sports Turf – Dr Colin Fleming, Plant Pathologist, Agri-Food and Horticulture Institute
• Managing Winter Kill in West of Scotland? – David Cole, Golf Course/Estate Manager, Loch Lomond Golf Club
• Howseman, Safety and Pesticides Updates – Jon Albutt, Principal Consultant, Jon Albutt Associates
• Linkedin – Masterclass – Lesley Wood, Principal Consultant, Targeting Innovation Ltd
• Redefining IPM; Reduced Chemical Management of Golf Course Turf – Frank Rossi Ph.D, Professor, Cornell University

We are now able to offer the new Microsoft Online Learning ‘Skills Collections’. Skills Collections include beginners, intermediate and advanced learning for the selected Microsoft applications. Skills Collections are available in either 2007 or 2010 versions in the following subjects: Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access, Project

Each of the Skills Collections is available to BIGGA Members at a reduced cost of £18.00 (ex VAT) thanks to the support of the Gold and Silver Key contributors to the Learning and Development Fund.

Other applications are available, contact the L&D Department if you have a specific requirement.

Higher Education Scholarships

The most recent scholarships have been awarded to

Gerg Pitmanout – hnc in Golf Course Management
Gary Douglas – hnc in Golf Course Management
Ferg Morris – Foundation Degree in Sports Turf Science

Stephen Jack – NVQ Level 4 Sports Turf Management

Happy Halloween! I know that safety is a topic of the past but I do like to mark the year with these little highlights.

Chairman of Green: “Brilliant, Bonfire Night is also a favourite of mine, watching fireworks followed by a trip to the pub with good friends – oh and I do like a good sparkler!”

Speaking of sparklers, Continue to Learn at Harrogate Week promises to be full of sparkles...