Last month I updated you all on the work I have been carrying out as the Standards Director to the European Greenkeepers Education Unit (EGEU). This month, I invite you to register on a new website which is designed to become the information portal to give greenkeepers, Golf Club Managers and employers the most up to date advice and guidance on education, training and qualifications within the sector. As the GTC seeks to continue its role to ensure British Golf Clubs and all greenkeepers have a range of qualifications available to employers and greenkeepers there has been an increase in enquiries from outside of Britain from countries relatively new to the game of golf and with little or no greenkeeper education system available. There is no doubt that in recent years the "game of golf" has woken up to the fact that the golf course is without doubt any clubs greatest asset. From the prestigious resort courses to your nine hole course all greenkeepers have a range of luxury and maintenance of the golf course is a criteria, offer quality courses and workshops not only in Britain but as I mentioned earlier much further afield. The British greenkeeper education, training and qualifications system is held in very high regard abroad as I witnessed first hand at the PGDA Conference held in Prague.

Some Greenkeeping Associations are represented in Prague and there was a tremendous camaraderie among delegates which is mirrored on a global basis as if it is often the same issues some problems that face both greenkeepers and golf club employers. It was certainly a privilege to make a presentation on behalf of the EGEU and to share what I called the British Model for greenkeeper education and training and to delegate there have been many barriers and frustrations along the way in establishing a creditable structure supported by the employers. Some Greenkeeping Associations are in exactly the same position many of us can remember pre-BIGGA and when there was little or no interest let alone funding support from any other golfing organisations. How things changed in Britain from 1987! The R&A and the Home Unions in Britain together with the PGA and PGA European Tour have certainly played a major role in supporting greenkeeper training in Britain and I am pleased to say still do.

We will be looking to these organisations and other key golfing bodies to support the EGEU. It is all designed to assist golf development and all greenkeepers who are looking to establish sustainable greenkeeper education systems. We will be encouraging countries to ensure the Greenkeeping Association and Golf Federation work together and engage with other professional bodies such as any Golf Course Owners Association, PGA or Golf Club Managers Association respectively.

Today there are more and more organisations within golf all having a special role to play within the game and we must all work together hopefully avoiding duplicating roles but complimenting each others work. The GTC is looking to work closely with the EGEU and all the organisations and companies who offer quality training for greenkeepers and golf club employers especially those looking to become part of the Quality Assured Scheme and be featured on the greenkeepertraining.com website.

With Las Vegas and the Golf Industry Show for another year the focus of the Learning and Development team will be to provide a new mode. Believe it or not, for us Continue to Learn in 2013 looks large for the web to consider and speakers to source. Several projects are also underway, including updating the Library, a review of the Master Greenkeeper Certificate, the writing of the new Accreditation scheme, reviewing the CPD scheme as well as co-ordinating the nominations for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and the Open Support Team. Yes, we’re busy bees!

**Golf Industry Show**

I’ve just returned from the Golf Industry Show, which this year was held in Las Vegas. I spent a great deal of my time, when not on the BIGGA Stand, meeting with the GCSAA’s education team and representatives from other international Associations. The 10 members who made up the BIGGA delegation were represented by Bernhard & Co. With a packed week of golf courses, visits, education seminars, the trade show, marking the BIGGA stand and attending receptions as well as sampling all that Vegas had to offer, they were certainly kept busy.

I’m not terribly sure that there was a level of interest that I was looking for all your help and your company.

**Safety Management System** – supported by Paramics Jacobson

In last month’s column I talked about the launch of the new Safety Management System available in the Members Area of the website, I’m pleased to say that the new SMS has received very positive feedback.

The original SMS will no longer be accessible after the end of April 2012. Full details of how to access and download your Rick Profiles is shown on page 44 of this magazine. All users of the original SMS will be emailed a reminder of their user name, password and instructions to access their information.

**Continue to Learn Education Programme 2013**

With planning of the 2013 Continue to Learn education programme underway, we are looking for ideas and suggestions for speakers and topics for the Turf Managers’ Conference, workshops and seminars.

If you have a proposal for a seminar that you would like to present, please send the details to me for consideration. If you have any suggestions for topics or speakers you would like to see on the programme please drop me an email to sami@bigga.co.uk.

**BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships**

Higher Education Scholarships are now available to those BIGGA members who are undertaking a Higher Education course. If you meet the following criteria may be eligible to apply for a scholarship: • Be a Full Member of BIGGA • Be working as a full-time greenkeeper • Have been a BIGGA Member for a minimum of two years • Have completed one or more courses that are eligible include: NVQ Level 4 or 5, HNC, Foundation Degree/HND, BSc, MSc. There is up to £1,000 available to those members who meet the criteria. To download an application form visit the Education area of the website under Resources.