There is little doubt that the golf course playing conditions in Britain, or the “other” sports turf playing surfaces, great strides have been made in recent years to maintain and present all year round playing surfaces and pleasing on the eye.

Not always easy, with increasing restrictions on water use, increasing costs of products, all of which are designed to assist the Course Manager meet the demands for his or her course, to attract members and visitors and to keep the business healthy.

We often focus on how continual greenkeeper education and training is a must for any golf course to survive. Few can argue with this statement, however, what about the employer’s continual education and training?

The GTC continues to maintain its Quality Assured Scheme of Centres and Training Providers, where apprenticeships, workshops, seminars etc. are all available to ensure golf clubs can access greenkeeper education, training and qualifications.

Colleges and private training providers all carry a vital role to deliver quality education and training courses but they would all pay tribute to the increasing number of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers, many of whom have gone through the modern training system in recent years, and who now are willingly sharing their knowledge and experience with their staff and at local and national events.

There was much criticism when vocational training appeared in the Sports Turf industry, but I believe the campaign that commenced in the early nineties is really paying dividends now.

Formal and informal on the job training is now very much taken for granted at golf clubs and carried out to National Standards, which are freely accessible for all to see.

Take a bow all of those Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers who host in-house training sessions. Knowledge is so much more accessible and the suppliers, dealers and manufacturers are all there to support you with information, website links and attendance at seminars and workshops.

BIGGA local section, regional and national have all played a major role in educating greenkeepers as well as the formal qualification route. Turf Clubs are appearing, all driven by passionate, knowledgeable greenkeepers and I am sure these will also grow from strength to strength.

So, if we are relatively content that greenkeeper education and training standards are in safe hands, why don’t we also collectively look at how best we improve the Course Manager/greenkeeper relationship with their employer?

Surely this relationship is crucial for the business to be successful?

We could add the Professional, Secretary Manager, and Catering Manager into this debate as they surely are the Management team at any golf club?

All the various Professional bodies from the PGA, OCMC and BIGGA in Britain, also have seen European Organisations emerge in recent years, all striving to ensure their members and member bodies are well educated, trained and qualified to the highest standards.

But what about the employers?

We all would like to think all golf club employers will recruit professional staff to manage their facilities and many do, however we have to respect the Proprietor and Committee person(s) who have the overall responsibility for the business.

During the last twelve months, the GTC with the excellent support of England Golf, has hosted seven employer-led workshops with Laurence Mag, Turf Master One, delivering the training on behalf of the GTC.

These pilot workshops were designed to give employers an overview of all aspects of course maintenance and management. We report that all workshops had a mix of delegates from Chairman of Green, Secretary Managers, Golf Professionals and Course Managers.

Credit must go to Laurence for pitching all the workshops at a level that all delegates enjoyed the day.

The GTC Board of Directors are continually looking at engaging golf club employers into improving their business through investing in greenkeeper training

The feedback from all 100+ delegates has been very positive and plans are in hand to extend the workshop into Scotland and Wales with the support of the Scottish Golf Union and Golf Union of Wales. The Home Unions are all working together as they fully support the GTC with the excellent support of the Scottish Golf Union and Golf Union of Wales.

The Home Unions are all working together as they fully support the GTC and all pay tribute to the increasing standards.

But who is the employer in this relationship?

Not always easy, with increasing demands for his or her course, to meet the employer’s continual education, to deliver quality education and training courses but they would all pay tribute to the increasing number of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers, many of whom are now are willingly sharing their knowledge and experience with their staff and at local and national events.

We often focus on how continual greenkeeper education and training is a must for any golf course to keep the business healthy. Demands for his or her course, to meet the employer’s continual education, to deliver quality education and training courses but they would all pay tribute to the increasing number of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers, many of whom are now are willingly sharing their knowledge and experience with their staff and at local and national events.

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Applicants must have the ability to demonstrate a passion for Golf Course Management alongside a proven track record of high standard course presentation – day to day running of a course and effective staff management are all essential attributes of the successful applicant.

Application is by Curriculum Vitae and covering letter to:

Golf Course Manager
Austin Lodge Golf Club
Park Road
St Albans
Herts AL2 1EM

Salary is dependent on qualifications and experience.

Conditions:
• 40 hrs per week in a Rota averaged over 14 day period with at least 2 full rest days.
• Salary commensurate with experience.
• All uniform will be supplied.

Applications, including a Curriculum Vitae and a covering letter, should be forwarded, by email only, to:
alastair.higgs@windleshamgolf.com

Alastair Higgs, Course Manager, Windlesham Golf, Grove End, Bagshot, Surrey GU19 5HY

The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

Learning and Development Executive

With 6,000 members located mainly in the UK, but also in Europe and worldwide we are the largest greenkeeping association in Europe. As part of BIGGA’s commitment to provide standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the greenkeeping profession a new role has been created and we are therefore searching for an outstanding candidate to join our Learning and Development Department.

Learning and Development is fundamental to the future success of BIGGA and its members. This role will be key in developing, upholding and maintaining quality of the delivery of the Learning and Development pathway for BIGGA members.

The pathway is the key focus to ensure that the high standards applied to greenkeeper education are understood and acknowledged as the benchmark throughout the golf industry.

Successful applicants should have a good knowledge of the sports turf education system, an understanding of greenkeeping practices and possess good organisational, written and verbal skills. Attention to detail, the ability to multi-task and meet deadlines, good administration skills, IT literacy and the ability to work on their own initiative are required.

Reporting to the Head of Learning and Development, the Executive will be instrumental in the future of greenkeeper advancement. Good communication skills are required to establish and maintain good relationships within the office environment and with members and suppliers.

This is a full time position and will be based at BIGGA House, near York, North Yorkshire.

Salary and package commensurate with the position. Details available on application.

Applications, including a Curriculum Vitae and a covering letter, should be forwarded, by email only, to info@bigga.co.uk by Monday 21 May 2012.

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