I was recently bought a cushion with the words “Good Day Sunshine” written on it. This prompted me to look at the lyrics of The Beatles’ song of the same name where I found the words “I need to laugh, and when the sun is out, I’ve got something I can laugh about.”

Let’s hope the sun comes out soon and we can all start having a good laugh instead of looking outside and seeing persistent rain!

Future Turf Managers’ Initiative

By the time you read this article, the inaugural Future Turf Managers’ event will have taken place at the Ransomes Jacobsen Headquarters in Ipswich.

Jacobsen recognise the importance of preparing the younger generation of greenkeepers to take on the role of Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager. The FTMI has been designed to provide practical tools and guidance to help the candidates to pursue their career aspirations through this professional development conference.

The group of 20 students and deputies were selected following an online application process. The successful applicants are:
- Lewis Birch – Greenkeeper, Sunningdale Golf Club
- James Bledge – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club
- Sean Borrett – Greenkeeper, Outlane Golf Club
- Ross Owen – Deputy Course Manager, Royston Burghley Hotel & Golf Course
- James Parker – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Close House Golf Club
- Leigh Powell – Deputy Course Manager, Hockley Golf Club
- Daniel Scott – Greenkeeper, Wolhurn Golf & Country Club
- Ben Breviner – First Assistant Greenkeeper, Abridge Golf & Country Club
- Tom Wood – Greenkeeper, Outlane Golf Club

During the two-day event the candidates will concentrate on topics including communications, budgeting, organisational politics, CV writing and interview techniques as well as taking part in discussion group on subjects such as team management and alternative career paths.

Supporting the candidates are five mentors who will work with the groups during the event and will continue to support them throughout the year.

The mentors are:
- Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper, Gleneagles
- Matt Plusted, Course Manager, Muswell Hill Golf Club
- Michael Sansicki, Club Manager, Dalwhit and Sydenham Hill Golf Club
- Lee Strutt MG, Golf Course Manager, TGFest
- Stuart Yardwood MG, Course Manager, Lynx Golf Club

Lorna Sheldon and David Bancroft-Turner – who gave hugely successful presentations at the Turf Managers’ Conference at BTME will pass on their extensive knowledge of professional communication techniques and dealing with golfers and their peers.

A round up of the event will be in the May issue of Greenkeeper International.

BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships

The latest member to receive a scholarship is Ben Burrill for his Golf Course Turfgrass Management qualification.

Funding is available for those candidates who are undertaking a higher education qualification.

Visit the website for further details: www.bigga.org.uk/education/funding-opportunities/

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year

Application forms for the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award have been distributed to all colleges and training providers and are also available to download from Education are of the website.

The closing date for applications is Friday 10 May 2013.

In the coming months we’re changing the content and layout of both the Membership and L&I sections of this magazine, based on feedback you gave at the recent Greenkeeper International survey.

Tell us how our education programme and membership benefits have helped you, and we can publicise all that BIGGA membership has to offer. Contact Communications Executive Steve Castle on steve.castle@bigga.co.uk

CHANGES ARE AFOOT…

It is with some excitement that I write this last membership column in its current format. There will be some subtle differences from May’s ‘Towards Greenkeeper International’ onwards.

As most members will be aware, BIGGA have been going through some organisational changes at BIGGA House over the last 12 months with new personnel being appointed. Although change can affect us in an emotional way, this change is bringing with it its own advantages. I think if you ask everyone at BIGGA House what they think of the alterations, they will say they are really positive. This is because for changes have been presented as a means of introducing improvements.

All the staff are very enthusiastic and excited about the future of BIGGA and are looking forward to working with the Board, the Regions, the Sections and you!

I read an article that ‘People don’t resist organisational change – people resist being changed’ and I think this is true of any organisation or even golf clubs, but most people are able to adapt to change if managed properly.

Greenkeeper International Feedback

BIGGA have recently been keenly in touch with your feedback on the Association’s membership magazine, Greenkeeper International, to find out what you think about it. You’ve told us what’s good, what’s not, what’s useful, what could do with improving and changing. The results gained via the survey, the Regional Administrators or the recent roadshows undertaken by Jim Croston, Tony Smith and myself have given us really useful and interesting feedback.

Thank you to all who took part in one or all of the feedback methods, but mostly thank you for being part of BIGGA and for providing us with excellent constructive feedback which we can now analyse, digest and incorporate in future issues of Greenkeeper International.

This is a great example of how we can work together to change, improve or just tweak benefits and services that BIGGA offer. We hope you like the discreet changes that will happen over the next few months within Greenkeeper International, please continue to let us know what you think.

Regional Roadshows

Jiro Croston, CEO, Tony Smith, 2013 Chairman and myself have spent a good majority of March travelling around the five regions talking to members of the section and regions, and looking at how elements of BIGGA’s current business plan.

From feedback received this has proved a very useful and worthwhile experience and I think it’s safe to say that the underlying message coming through was that as a unified group we can take BIGGA forward by working together, from sections to regions to national board and staff. Your section representatives can brief you at your next meeting regarding the roadshow and its contents or contact your Regional Administrator.

Sponsorship

The recent BTME event held in Harrogate was a great event for industry professionals to promote their businesses and gain exposure. The event has proved to be a great networking opportunity and an effective way to promote future business opportunities.

As part of the event, one area that caused a buzz was the Turf Managers Knockout Challenge. This event was held to promote the Knockout Challenge at the Ashby20 race on Sunday 17th May at the 2013 BTME event. The Knockout Challenge is a great opportunity for industry professionals to network and develop relationships with their peers.

A further area that was successful is the ‘My Bigga World in a Day’ competition. This competition was held to encourage students who are currently studying a higher education qualification.

The competition was open to all students who are studying a course that is currently accredited by BIGGA.

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