**FUTURE TURF MANAGERS - DELEGATES ANNOUNCED**

The successful applicants for the inaugural Jacobsen Future Turf Managers’ Initiative have been announced by BIGGA.

Twenty greenkeepers from across the UK are now looking forward to an intensive two days of seminars and workshops covering a range of subjects designed to equip them for success in their future careers. These include in-depth courses on communications, budgeting, organisational politics, CV writing and interview techniques plus breakout sessions looking at other key subjects.

BIGGA and Jacobsen faced a tough decision selecting 20 names from all the candidates who completed an application form designed to find out more about them and their aspirations. They are now preparing to head to Jacobsen’s Ipswich headquarters for two days in April for the sessions which complement BIGGA’s Assistants Development Programme that Jacobsen kindly agrees to sponsor.

One of the successful candidates was James Bledge (shown inset), Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club in Kent. He said: “I was delighted when I found out I’d got a place. I always try and further my education as much as possible, whether that be at BTME or at other BIGGA events, and these sessions cover exactly the sort of areas I’m looking to increase my knowledge in.

“|’ve got a plan to hopefully make the next step in my career in two or three years, and modules such as budgeting and CV writing will really help me so I’m looking forward to it.”

Lorna Sheldon (below right) and David Bancroft-Turner – who gave hugely successful presentations at the Turf Managers’ Conference at BTME – will be again passing on their extensive knowledge of professional communication techniques and dealing with golf club politics respectively.

Delegates will also be given budget guidance by Lee Strutt MGI - Course Managers’ Initiative at 8am – plus advice on further educational opportunities with BIGGA. BIGGA’s Learning & Development Executive (Technical) Stuart Green added: “There has been an excellent response to the initiative, with 45 applications received. This made the process of selection all the more difficult as we felt that all the applicants would have benefited. However, this is a cut the end of the journey for the successful applicants but the beginning of the next phase in their future turf manager careers.”

Many thanks to all who applied, and look out for coverage of the event in next month’s Greenkeeper International. For more details of the format for the event in next month’s Greenkeeper International. For the full list of successful candidates please turn to page 14.

**NEIL BAKER APPOINTED COURSE MANAGER AT LITTLE ASTON**

Neil Baker has been appointed the new Course Manager at Little Aston Golf Club in Staffordshire. He’s been Course Manager at Tandridge Golf Club in Surrey for the last seven years and takes up his new post after working to bring Tandridge back to its original Harry Colt design roots.

He said: “My new position fulfills a career goal, and my main aim now is to help the club further enhance a very special golfing environment.

With its history and private feel I couldn’t turn down the chance to join this esteemed venue.”

A spokesman for the Club said: “We were very impressed with the professionalism of all the Course Managers we interviewed, however Neil was the clear choice.

“We are sure he will lead the greenkeeping team so that we continue to have an outstanding golf course enjoyed by members and visitors alike.”

**FULL HOUSE AT BIGGA SCOTTISH CONFERENCE**

David Jones has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Woodside Golf Club in Cheshire – after a chance encounter in the Club Pro Shop.

Three handicapper David, who previously worked at Vale Royal Abbey Golf Club, turned up at nearby Woodside for a round, and ended up chatting to some of the family who own the course.

He then found out they were on the lookout for an Assistant Course Manager so he sent in an application. David takes up the story: “I hadn’t been to the next step up in my career and make my own mark somewhere, I have spoken to them and thought I’d send in my CV for the Assistant’s role, but unbeknownst to me the Head Greenkeeper had actually left so they interviewed me for that position.

“I was really pleased when they offered me my first Head Greenkeeper role here and it just goes to show when a conversation can lead you.”

The pay and play in Cheshire offer a 5900 yard par 69 course, as well as a short par three course and driving range, and employs just two other greenkeepers as well as David.

He added: “I’ve been so busy I haven’t had a lunch break all my first week! There’s a lot to do, mainly presentation season, and the par three course has been injected so that new that needs an overhaul.

“None of the three of us, we’ve obviously got limited kit and a limited budget but I’m determined to really make an impact here.”

Grant Foglemy from the Redruth and Golf Club then told his story ‘Taking the Next Step’, the journey he has taken over the last 12 months from being in a Deputy’s position to that of Course Manager.

Our first speaker of the morning was Chris Haspell, Head Greenkeeper at Castle Stuart Golf Links. The audience were enthused as they listened to the downsides problems experienced during the 2011 Scottish Open and the fantastic effort of the greenkeepers to get the course available for play on the final day - then to hear of the great success that was 2012. After lunch Andy O’Hara, Scottish Regional Chairman, stated his ambition of improving education opportunities for all and to make BIGGA a must join association. He then presented the Harry Diamond Award to the Scottish Student of the Year, Chris Watson.

The afternoon session provided technical presentations for the audience. Firstly Bill Lawlor from the Nact Group hosted a Q&A session on the importance of Health and Safety for greenkeepers.

This was followed by Dr Christian Spring from the STRI presenting an excellent seminar on ‘Earthworms and Earthworms’ in Aberdeenshire. It was a very detailed presentation on the creation of the championship course and his vision for the immediately to come.

Next up was John Bambury, Links Superintendent at Trump International Golf Links in Aberdeenshire. It was a very detailed presentation on the creation of the championship course and his team.

Andy O’Hara closed proceedings by thanking our speakers and indeed the delegates for making the day extremely successful.

A special thanks was extended to Peter Boyd, former RA for Scotland for interrupting his retirement to provide support throughout the day.

Elipherus Curtiss from Greens Progress said: “I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and I felt that all presentations flowed together very nicely”,

Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust, added: “I haven’t been to all the conferences over the past five years but I thought this was one of the best I’ve attended.

“There was a great variety of seminars and presentations something for everyone”.

Looking forward to 2014, an exceptional line-up is already being put together for the conference. On Tuesday 4 March with Steve Chappell of Glencairns booked to provide insight into the run up to the 2014 Ryder Cup. Look forward to seeing you there.”

BIGGA’s Scottish Regional Administrator John Young reports from a packed Scottish Regional Conference