Bon Jovi wrote a song called ‘I’ll sleep when I’m dead’: I certainly slept the sleep of the dead the weekend following the most successful Continue to Learn education programme ever! Now that I’m back at my desk, it almost feels as if it never happened although I now have the figures in front of me to prove that it did.

We saw over 2,400 people through the doors to the Queen’s Suite to attend the education programme, breaking all previous records. A big thank you must go to all of you for your continued support of the education programme. Thom Nikolai ‘The Doctor of Green Speed’ from Michigan State University proved to be a big draw, selling out his workshop, ‘The A, B, C’s of Putting Green Maintenance’, attracting the largest audience at the Turf Managers’ Conference and giving us a capacity audience for his seminar ‘Managing for Green Speed’. To quote Thom I have never enjoyed myself more at a conference, I have never been in a friendlier place in my life.

The Ryder Cup academies were extremely popular with near or capacity audiences. Featuring course managers Jim McKeenie (Celtic Manor, 2010), Curtis Tyrrell, MG, CGC (Medinah, 2012) and Steve Chamberlain (Gleneagles, 2014) entertaining the audience with behind the scenes stories, photographs and experiences. Curtis thoroughly enjoyed his visit to the UK - I think we might be seeing him grace the BTME show again in the future!

The introduction of the “Focus On” sessions proved to be a successful addition to the programme with the majority sold out. Hopefully you will see an increase in this type of session in future years.

The seminar pre-booking for BIGGA members worked fairly well, but will have a polish for next year to improve the system. My thanks go to those patient attendees who had to stand in queues and experience my loud voice! My personal thanks go to all the presenters who provide professional and quality education and make it look so easy. The challenge now begins again to develop the programme for 2014. Send your ideas to: sami@bigga.co.uk.

Future Turf Managers Initiative

Jacobsen turf equipment and BIGGA have developed a highly interactive, professional development conference, designed to provide younger greenkeepers with the tools to go further in their industry.

You can be selected by showing initiative in your current position, by demonstrating an interest in the industry or being actively involved in education at region and national level. The FTMI will take place at Ban Somes Jacobsen’s headquarters in Ipswitch from 3 – 5 April 2013. It will be an intensive three days of seminars, talks and workshops covering:

- communications
- budgeting
- team management
- CV writing and interview techniques
- volunteered
- Plus break-out sessions on other subjects

Apply now by visiting the Members Area of the BIGGA website and following the link to complete an online application form. There are only 20 places available for this inaugural event. Get online and complete your application before the closing date of 15 February 2013. All applications must be endorsed by your nominator. This could be your manager, supervisor, regional administrator or trade representative. If you have any queries, please contact Stuart Green on 01347 833800 (option 3) or stuart@bigga.co.uk.

BTME 2013

Having just returned to BIGGA House after an excellent BTME2013 Elaine and I would like to say how much we enjoyed meeting so many members past, present and future.

It really helps us to put names to faces and it’s a perfect opportunity to meet so many of you, so thank you for taking the time and making the effort to come and say hello.

The BIGGA Stand was busy the whole three days, the Regional Administrators, John Young (Scotland), Sandra Raper (Northern and Midlands), Clive Osgood (South East) and Jane Jones (South West/ South Wales) were all on hand to welcome members to all five regions.

A section/region map displays showed how all 26 sections play a huge part in communicating information from across the membership through section committees, region committees and to the national committee.

Watch out for information on the map and shows how Working together for the future success of BIGGA, they are taking place throughout the five regions during February and March, contact your Regional Administrator for details, Jim Croxton (Chairman) and Tracey Maddison (General Manager) will be travelling around the regions to engage with sections and explain the key role they have to play in the future success of BIGGA.

The BIGGA Stand this year displayed some clothing, the navy blue jumpers, the navy blue windbreakers, the navy blue shirts and the fantastic navy blue trousers. All display stands had the BIGGA logo on show, if anybody wishes to purchase any of these items please contact Elaine Jones in the Membership department by email membership@bigga.co.uk or by telephone 01347 833800 select option 1.

Future Turf Managers Initiative (FTMI)

The Jacobsen Future Turf Managers Initiative (FTMI) will target the next generation of greenkeepers who demonstrate the ability and drive to become leaders of their profession in the future.

A maximum of 20 students will be selected for FTMI in any one year to attend a three-day residential course in the early part of the year and then be mentored throughout by a high profile course manager.

To apply log into the members area of the BIGGA website, select ‘Future Turf Managers Initiative’ from the options down the left hand side and select the link to the online application form.

Fill in the questions over the next few pages and provide details of your nominator. This could be your manager, supervisor, regional administrator or trade representative. The application process should take 15-20 minutes.

Once your application has been submitted, a form will be sent to your nominator to complete and return to BIGGA.

The deadline for your application is 15th February 2013. Your application will be reviewed by a panel from BIGGA and Jacobsen and you will be informed by the 1st March 2013, if you have been successful.