This month David looks at why and how British educated and trained greenkeepers are still very much in demand worldwide and how international students are still looking to attend British colleges. Plus, how the GTC is now helping golf developing countries become the future custodians of golf courses. Course Managers, Deputies and in fact all levels of greenkeepers have more access to knowledge and qualifications, as online learning becomes so much more accessible. A Degree in Sports Turf Surfaces is no longer just a dream for many greenkeepers, it is a reality. The Internet has obviously helped and communication across the world of greenkeeping appears to be going from strength to strength.

Having mentioned the formal qualifications, it must not be forgotten that the two key elements - knowledge and experience - are the very foundation which underpin any education structure.

Through my involvement in advising an increasing number of countries within my role as Standards Director to the European Greenkeeping Education Unit (or GTC, formerly the Greenkeeper Training Europe), it is apparent that with very few exceptions, many countries as yet have no formal greenkeeper education system.

Some countries do not have a greenkeeping association, however, the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers' Association (FEGGA) supports those established Greenkeeping Associations in Europe and is also helping countries where golf is developing to start an association.

BIGGA, as a founder member of FEGGA, also plays an important role, with former BIGGA Chairman Paul Worster, now a FEGGA Director, offering to assist the younger Greenkeeping Associations.

It is apparent in many countries that Greenkeeping Associations have little or no support from their Golf Federation or Union to promote greenkeeper education. This is something that the European Golf Association (EGA) are currently looking to address and Richard Heath, the General Secretary to the EGA and the EGA Board, is looking at how best they can support their affiliates.

Thankfully there is no such problem in Britain with The GTC established as the organisation where BRAGA and the British Home Unions meet to discuss all aspects of greenkeeper education, training and qualifications. It is a success story and one we are sharing as a blueprint with other countries.

Ultimately, it is the golf club employer who benefits most from having well trained staff and to have the major employer bodies around the table with the professional body for greenkeepers certainly has great benefit for golf clubs and greenkeepers alike.

The Government still looks to employers to take the lead on establishing Occupational Standards for their particular sector.

What follows are funding incentives such as apprenticeship allowances which in Britain have benefited many employers and greenkeepers over the years.

In summary, British trained and educated greenkeepers are operating in many countries and the sharing of best practices amongst golf organisations, associations, education establishments and companies within the sector must be well for the future standards of golf course maintenance and management.

For all the latest information on greenkeeper education, training courses visit the GTC’s website www.the-gtc.co.uk

“Turf college lecturers are now working closer than ever with Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to develop apprentices to become the future custodians of golf courses”
Photographic competition

How can you win our coveted members’ competition, and see your photography grace Greenkeeper International and the BIGGA Calendar 2014, following in the footsteps of recent winner – Craig Boath, Head Greenkeeper of the Carnoustie Championship Course

Are you a BIGGA member and do you fancy yourself as a budding photographer? The competition offers you the chance to portray your course in a variety of publications, with the winner receiving a full course feature in GI

Our industry offers terrific opportunities for stunning photography across the year – and now is the time to send in the images many of you have captured from the autumn and winter. The forthcoming weeks also offer another chance for great spring and summer shots.

The competition is judged by a panel of experts including professional photographers Alan Birch and Eric Hepworth – and the winner will receive a framed image of their choice from Eric’s superb selection of golf course photography (www.hepworthgolfphotography.com), as well as one of your own entry. Two runners-up will receive an unframed print, and the final 12 will all be featured in next year’s calendar.

To enter, please send your images to comps@bigga.co.uk - the closing date is the 31st July 2013. Please write “BIGGA PHOTO COMP 2013” is the subject header of your email, and label your entries with your name, club/college currently at, membership number and a brief caption of the course.

Images need to be high resolution and landscape shape (at least 30cm wide at 300dpi) suitable for an A3 calendar. Please avoid reducing the file size as this will reduce the quality – we recommend one image per email if file size becomes an issue – or use a compression facility such as winzip or an ftp site such as www.mailbigfile.com

There is no limit to the amount of images you can send us, but please seek permission of the club before sending your entries – we are sure they will be delighted with the potential coverage.

Only BIGGA members are eligible to enter. Good to luck to all.

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Quick ‘Nine Hole’ Quiz Answers:

1) East Stirlingshire
2) York City
3) Jose Mourinho
4) Oxford United
5) Lee Martin
6) Peterborough
7) Teddy Sheringham & Ole Gunnar Solskjaer
8) 13
9) Chapman

BIGGA Seminars at SALTEX 2013

The Grandstand, Royal Windsor Race Course

Wednesday 4 September 2013

BIGGA is delighted to have once again, been invited by the IOG to present a series of seminars at SALTEX 2013.

10.15 am – 11.15 pm
Greens Drainage - Mission Possible

A workable solution - Transforming soil based greens with Deep Thatch and Black Layer at Robin Hood Golf Club. Discover the methods used and the solution to training troublesome greens.

Presented by Andy Wood, Course Manager, Robin Hood GC.

11.30 am – 12.30 pm
Sand Traps and Money Pits

This session will look at managing and constructing golf course bunkers on limited budgets, whilst revisiting the past to shape our future. It will also include the art of compost creation and its role in modern traditional greenkeeping.

Presented by Stuart Yarwood MG, Golf Course Manager, Lymm Golf Club.

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm
Go in Green…..Come Out Clean

Winter disease on golf greens is particularly problematic since there is little turf growth to allow recovery and for scars to heal. This can impact the playability of greens right through into the spring period leading to the dissatisfaction of golfers. An integrated approach to disease management can reduce the disease pressure, improve turf health and enhance the performance of fungicide applications.

New findings on disease management will be presented along with practical advice for how to deliver smooth, disease free greens right through the high risk autumn and winter periods.

Presented by Dr Simon Watson, Syngenta Technical Manager, EAME Turf and Landscape.

BIGGA CPD Credits

- 1 CPD credit is available for each seminar.

A CPD register will be available at the end of each seminar.