MY FTMI 2014

Kevin Glazier, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club, was one of the delegates on the Future Turf Managers’ Initiative 2014 at Ransomes Jacobsen’s Ipswich HQ. Here’s his report on a “fantastic” week...

On 25 March, the candidates made their journeys from England and Scotland and descended on Ipswich. A tour of the factory was first on the agenda which was a real eye opener for all.

The majority of us take machines for granted when we start work at 6am in the morning, however the attention to detail when a machine is being built is incredible to see from a nut to a cylinder. Jacobsen have a three hole golf course on site which is kept to a high standard by Jamie Hughes – the greens are immaculate. We had the opportunity to play the par three course, and the winner was Gregor Mackintosh from Turnberry with a score of one under par. The day concluded with an open forum with Mike Sawicki.

Two intense days pass followed by the Wednesday, with Lorna Slack giving a detailed presentation on writing a CV which made us all realise how important CVs really are. Lorna then spoke about all aspects of interview techniques. Effective communication strategies followed later in the morning with “Building a Budget”. This is was presented by Lee Strutt MG. Candidates were introduced to budgeting, how to plan a budget and the process is open for the second course at Ransomes Jacobsen in Ipswich where they received first hand information on the turf care equipment of one of the world’s leading manufacturers.

One of the graduates, Frank Ahern, said: “We not only learnt about turf and resource management but also gained a solid background in the economics and strategic marketing of golf courses.”

Ian Butler, the English director of WINSTONUniversity added: “Proof of how much our graduates are sought after is demonstrated by the fact that all the graduates are now working in the industry. At present the application process is open for the second course at WINSTONUniversity starting in October. Hubertus von Treuenfels, CEO of WINSTONUniversity, said: “The demand is already very high. Since we can only accept 20 students per course we are in a very comfortable situation where we can choose the best applicants. This being said I like to stress that we do not want to deter anyone to apply for the new semester which will start in October 2014 and run until the end of March 2015.”

BIGGA AND EVERRIS PARTNERSHIP

BIGGA are delighted to announce the launch of our latest Partnership as we join forces with Everris. We announced last month, we’ve created a series of new packages designed to improve the recognition given to our supporters.

Tips and suggestions to improve performance and also introduce us to the four different political ‘animals’.

For me, being selected for the FTMI was an honour and one that I would strongly recommend to any greenkeeper to apply for. Everyone on the course shares the dream of becoming a Course Manager and the FTMI showed many aspects which you don’t think about necessarily when doing the day job. As one mentor said, being a Course Manager is 10% greenkeeping and 90% managing. All the seminars were beneficial and highly interesting, but if I had to pick highlights I would go for Lee Strutt’s, David Bancroft-Turner’s and Steve Chappell’s. Throughout my career I have been told that networking is a great way to learn, meet fellow greenkeepers and get yourself known around the industry. To speak to 20 other candidates and five mentors was fascinating as you can discuss aspects of the job you wouldn’t normally discuss. The FTMI has made me focus more on what I want from greenkeeping - become a Course Manager.

The skills I have taken away will improve the knowledge and experience I’ve taken from Gavin Kinella MG at Royal Mid Surrey.

To conclude this was a fantastic opportunity and one I would like to thank BIGGA and Jacobsen for hosting.

WALTER HELPS GRADUATES CELEBRATE TURF DIPLOMAS

BIGGA Life Member Walter Woods helped a dozen graduates celebrate their diplomas in turf maintenance at the home of golf.

Walter served as Superintendent for the St Andrews Links Trust for 21 years, and was on hand as the 12 graduates from WINSTONUniversity passed their six-month course.

The trip to St Andrews topped off six months of a unique education for golf course and club managers at the university, which is based in Germany and focuses on teaching all manner of disciplines in the turf industry.

During the trip to Scotland the group gained new insights in the maintenance of world class courses like the Duke’s Course and the links of Kinghorn.

On the way to Scotland the group visited the headquarters of Ransomes Jacobsen in Ipswich where they received first hand information on the turf care equipment of one of the world’s leading manufacturers.

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BIGGA and Everris will work to develop their own knowledge and expertise both on and off the golf course.”