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March 1999 Greenkeeper International
Over the past few months there has been a lot of discussion about education, partly triggered off by the extraordinary decision by the EGU to withdraw its funding for the GTC. I hope by the time you read these notes much will have been resolved in this area.

What is needed, is for the GTC to become a strong independent body, properly constituted and with the constituent bodies including BIGGA working in harmony and effectively, to take the training of greenkeepers to higher levels. The crisis caused by the EGU presents us all with the opportunity to do just that. The GTC has made great strides in implementing NVQs, which is the government based education initiative and one which we must support; it's the EGU's role to maintain the golf course. The crisis caused by the EGU presents us all with the opportunity to do just that. The GTC has made great strides in implementing NVQs, which is the government based education initiative and one which we must support.

It's worth just taking a look at the N/SVQs, which is the GTC's NVQ. There are 104 studying at different stages, with 20 having gained their certificates. BIGGA Management Courses at Aldwark and out in the regions are on average taken up by around 400 each year. If you wish to have information on the 1999 - 2000 courses they will be ready in May; so write or phone Ken or Sam to be put on the mailing list.

Education today is a far cry from my younger days and covers all areas from trainees to Course Managers, so I get a bit annoyed with anyone who sees certificates of attendance better than certificates of achievement. Greenkeepers of today are better equipped to deal with modern education. I only applaud the high standard of golf courses which are being presented for the golfers, sometimes under pressure, and maybe we need to try and educate club management, and in particular the Green Chairman, so that they understand a little more about the management of golf courses.

The STRI, in conjunction with BIGGA, runs just such a workshop at BTME every year. It would be interesting to hear the views from anyone who attended.

I am not going to write to much about the BTME week because this will be covered by others, but I would just like to say that both the Conference and Exhibition was better than ever. We keep saying this but it's true! I would personally like to thank first, all our staff who worked so hard and just as important kept smiling. The organisation was first class. I don't like to pick out individuals but I feel I must mention Ken, who put the whole education programme together for the entire week, only to fall ill at the last minute and so was unable to see the fruits of his labour. I would also like to thank all the traders for their support, along with all the helpers. It was a great week! Last but not least, thanks to all the members for coming along and making it such a success.

If you remember last month I talked about the value of BIGGA membership. I have just saved myself £40 on car insurance, for myself and Marion by using the Association's insurers, and you can all do the same!
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