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June 2002

Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by July 6, 2002

Regulars

News
Pages 4, 5, 6 & 7

8 Letters

10 Education
Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, highlights some of the training courses that are available to you this season

12 Membership

30 Talking Heads
Six top men talk about their likes and dislikes when it comes to golf course trees

32 New Products
Showcasing some of the great new products recently released onto the market

36-40 Around the Green

50 Features Listing
Helping you track down some of Greenkeeper International’s past articles

62 As I see it...
BIGGA National Chairman, Richard Barker, remained firmly in the UK last month but still found time to play in his own Season event; a John Deere event; watch a little golf at the Belfry and have lunch at The Savoy

Features

9 Calabria - A new golfing frontier
Much travelled Arne Van Amerongen reports from his latest port of call

14 The Club which never sleeps
Scott MacCallum visited Greatham Valley where the team would make an army of ants look lazy

19 Finding Fungi
Dr Kate Entwistle looks at disease outbreaks - and how they are inevitable, but not straightforward, for the fungi

22 Inflated ideas
Roland Taylor looks at the development of the tyre and how it has brought about the increased use of the ATV

26 In at the deep end
Michael Spencer gives some excellent advice on the maintenance and upkeep of lakes and ponds

34 Poa Annuu can be controlled
Jim Arthur hands out some advice to those who feel living with poa is the only answer

Visit www.bigga.org.uk and check out the latest chat from the greenkeeping industry

GREENKEEPERS BY GREENKEEPERS
Free the Titleist One?

Last month saw a great deal of news print devoted to one John Collinson. Does the name ring a bell? Well, he is the guy who was jailed for three months for gathering thousands of golf balls from golf club lakes up and down the country. His case was highlighted as one of these situations where this country gets things so wrong. How could lakes up and down the country be allowed such an abuse? Did the man go to jail? Does the name ring a bell?

The fact that he declared his earnings to the Tax Man was also made to reinforce the point that here was a legitimate businessman and the fact that he was seen to be making such a decent living from his chosen career might well encourage others to take the same action and our golf courses could end up basking in the middle of the night than they are during the day. Where would that leave us?

With so many ecology and environmental projects being carried out on our courses the last thing we want is rubber clad, flipper wearing ball collectors damaging our flora and fauna, never mind our greens and bunkers.

And another thing...

What would you think if you arrived at the course early one morning to find a submerged body tangled up in weeds at the bottom of one of your lakes? I'd say that would be quite traumatic, and with the diving going on in the middle of the night together with the levels of stealth required it is not out with the realms of possibility.

Yes, perhaps Mr Collinson didn't deserve his prison sentence but he certainly isn't an innocent party in the whole affair.

This is the final magazine to be designed by David Emery who is leaving the Association to further his design career with another company. David has worked on every magazine since February '98 and done much to ensure a professional look to the rest of the Association's literature. I would like to wish him well for the future and thank him for his outstanding work over the last four years.

Continuing to set high standards

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) is smoothing the path to the introduction of revised Sports Turf vocational qualifications in July. National Vocational Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in golf greenkeeping and ground maintenance are being updated to take in the latest advances in technology in the amenity horticulture world. The GTC has taken a lead role in this in collaboration with the two Awarding Bodies, City and Guilds and the Scottish Qualifications Authority. A network of training providers guide students to the qualifications and it is essential that these providers all work to the same standards. The GTC has therefore been encouraging the Awarding Bodies to develop standard documentation covering the learning programme.

The GTC's Education Director, David Golding said: "The GTC is committed to setting high and common standards in the UK and Ireland. This is why we have been at the forefront in setting out the knowledge and practical standards for the revised NVQs and SVQs."

Chipping Norton GC wins first Deere qualifier

A four man team from Chipping Norton Golf Club is heading for the famous Brazeau tournament at The Belfry, having won the first British regional qualifier in the inaugural 2002 John Deere Team Championship golf tournament.

The team - consisting of Club Secretary Simon Chislett, Club Captain/Chairman, John Willis, Greenkeeper, Steve Doyle, and Club Professional, Neil Rowlands - beat off the challenge of 14 other teams in the competition, which was organised by Peter Helps, Sales Manager at John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare of Bloedlow, Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.

He was assisted on the day by John Deere representative Henry Bredin and BIGGA's Midlands Regional Administrator Peter Larter. The winners finished on 20 under, two shots clear of the field. The competition is based on a modified scramble, with the professional playing his own ball throughout the 18 holes, and the other three players forming the scramble team. The lowest score at each hole of either the professional or the net scramble team. Chipping Norton GC made the most of a little local knowledge - the qualifier was held at the club's own course in Southcombe, Oxfordshire on April 23. The team now goes through to the Great Britain and Ireland national final at The Belfry on August 19, to play for a place in the world final at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA in November.

"We've run a great many tournaments here, but never one quite like this, or with teams made up in this way," said Club Secretary Simon Chislett. "It was a long and nervous wait to see who won, as we tee'd off first, but it was worth it - and I have to say, we'd happily host the competition again! We're all looking forward to playing at The Belfry, but there won't be any advantage for us this time as none of the amateurs have played it before."

Now in its 16th year, the John Deere Team Championship has traditionally been open only to teams from the USA and Canada. Last year invitations were extended to Germany and Australia, and this year teams from Great Britain and Ireland are also included. After the national final at The Belfry, two winning teams - one from Great Britain and one from Ireland - will travel to the USA with the chance to be crowned John Deere World Team Champions 2002.

John Deere is also making a donation of £25 for each British and Irish team entered, to support the educational activities of BIGGA (British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association) and GCSAI (Golf Course Superintendents Association of Ireland).

Twenty years of success for Charterhouse

Charterhouse Turf Machinery recently celebrated 20 years of supplying equipment for greenkeeping and grounds maintenance tasks. The company is best known for the Verti-Drain range of deep aerators, the Rotovator, the Redexim of Holland. This product revolutionised turf management when it was introduced to the UK in the early 1980s. Charterhouse subsequently expanded into emergent niche markets, with ranges such as over-seeders, scarifiers, core aerators, collectioners and pedestrian turf aerators. The company have also diversified into consumer-oriented products, including DR wheeled trimmers and brushcutters. In 1999, Charterhouse bought the Michael Richardson Ltd business, specialising in the supply of agricultural and cultural and forestry equipment, broadening its market reach still further.

Most recently, Charterhouse added the Antonio Carraro 'super-compact' tractors and the Rogers Windfoil shredded boom sprayers. To mark their 20th anniversary, Charterhouse recently held a special dinner attended by past and present employees. A special feature was a commemorative cake baked by Secretary Barbara Jarman.

"Having identified the turf equipment market as a specialist market for high quality products, Charterhouse quickly became recognised as experts in our field," says Philip Threadgold, a founder of the company. "Our ongoing flexibility has enabled us to develop the business to meet trends in new and existing markets, and we can look forward with confidence and excitement to the next 20 - and beyond."
English Golf on course with Nature

Golf clubs across England stand to benefit from free environmental management advice thanks to an innovative scheme to be launched this summer.

The English Golf Union and the government's wildlife advisers, English Nature, have provided joint funding for this new scheme, to be delivered by STRI, the golf industry's independent advisory and research specialists.

An additional ecologist will be employed to work under the guidance of Bob Taylor, STRI's Senior Ecologist, now well established in golf course ecology circles. Over the next two months details of the scheme with an application form will be sent to all English Golf Union affiliated clubs. In July STRI will begin visiting up to 70 golf clubs assigned by representatives from EGU and English Nature from applications received by 28 June. This service is specifically designed for golf clubs who have had little or no ecological environmental input, to raise awareness of ecological issues relating to their golf courses. An STRI ecologist will spend a day walking each course with greenkeeping staff and club officials before preparing a detailed report offering professional environmental management advice.

Participating clubs will benefit from ongoing support from STRI for an 18 month period. At the end of which they will receive a free follow-up visit to assess progress and, hopefully, a certificate to acknowledge their environmental commitment and showcase wildlife gain.

Applications unsuccessful in the first year of the project will automatically be carried over to the following year for consideration, alongside opportunities for new applicants. A series of joint newsletters will be published and circulated by STRI to follow the progress of clubs taking part in the scheme.

The joint funding for this free service will also extend to offering support to all EGU affiliated clubs through telephone and written advice from STRI. A series of advisory leaflets providing conservation advice on issues ranging from pesticides to management of the rough will be made available free of charge.

This three-year project heralds a new era of co-operation between golf clubs and conservationists, and is the culmination of a series of meetings between the EGU, English Nature and the STRI over the last two years. English Nature's Chief Scientist, Dr Keith Duff, himself a keen golfer, said: "Golf courses, contrary to popular belief, can provide vital green corridors and oases for wildlife amongst an ever encroaching tide of developed land and monocultured farmland. Often relatively minor changes to course management can deliver huge benefits to wildlife and we're delighted to co-fund this ground breaking scheme to provide free tailored expert environmental advice to golf clubs throughout England."

Golf Services Committee Chairman, Colin Spurr, added, "The EGU welcomes the opportunity to join with English Nature and the STRI on this project which will ultimately be to the benefit of both our member clubs and the wonderful habitats that exist on their courses. This can only be good news for golf and conservation."

This free initiative is not intended to replace more comprehensive ecology and environmental services from STRI or other providers.

Boughton expands

To keep pace with expansion, Boughton Loam Ltd. have added a further two new machines to its growing contract fleet. A Kubota 4200 series tractor and a Charterhouse 7326 – 2.5 metre Outfield Verti-drain will be brought immediately into use. These machines will compliment the existing fleet, increasing capacity in the forthcoming end of season renovation on winter sports pitches. They will also be used in the ongoing maintenance of golf courses and cricket pitches.

All machines are operated by Boughton Loam’s own highly trained staff who have extensive greenskeeping and landscaping experience.

Roger receives STRI honour

STRI's former Chairman, Roger Robinson, has accepted a position of Life Vice-President of the STRI, offered in recognition of his valuable contributions both as a member and as Chairman of STRI's Executive Committee.

Roger became a member of the committee in 1986, then known as the STRI Board of Management and Executive Committee, as a representative of the R&A. In 1992 he was elected as Vice Chairman, becoming Chairman in 1995, working closely with Dr Mike Canaway who had been appointed to the new position of Chief Executive. Roger retired as Chairman in September 2001, having supported for over 12 months Dr Gordon McKillop, STRI's current Chief Executive, whose appointment he oversaw in June 2000. Roger's experience and connections with the golfing world extend far beyond the STRI including both the R&A and BIGGA. As a member of the R&A, Roger was asked to serve on The Championship Rules of Golf Committee, The Council of National Golf Unions and currently The Membership Committee. It was as an R&A representative that he became actively involved in the formation of BIGGA in 1987 and sat on the BIGGA Board as a Trustee until 1996. Not all of Roger's activities have been connected with the "political" world of golf. His personal love of the game is evident at his club. The Royal Liverpool Golf Club where he was Captain in 1982. In 1992/93 he was an Oxford Blue and later played many times for Cheshire becoming President of the Cheshire Union of Golf Clubs in 1987. Acceptance of this position will enable Roger to stay in touch with developments at STRI even though he has officially retired.

Irritech launched

Roger Davey, Senior Design Engineer and Area Manager for Omcis Irrigation, has left after 13 years to become Managing Director of Irritech Limited - Independent Irrigation Consultants.

Roger has amassed a vast experience of golf course irrigation design and management projects, both within the UK and in Europe. This helps in understanding each individual client's needs and the ability of different irrigation equipment to meet these needs, concentrating irrigation designs on efficiency, economy and environmental impact.

Irritech will offer independent analysis of existing irrigation systems, provide specifications for new systems and system upgrades, and provide tender evaluation and project management.

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Royal Inverdivot GC... Strip Cartoonist of the Year www.tonyhusband.co.uk

Captain, you know how you said I have to get rid of the males...

Because they're damaging the course yes

How do I stand with the golfers?

Members of the East of Scotland Section paid a recent visit to Kingsbarns Golf Club. The trip was in association with local Toro dealer, Henderson Grass Machinery (Haddington)
New appointments at John Deere

Three senior appointments have been announced at John Deere. Graham Williams has left Langar to replace Joe Weegenaar as International Marketing & Sales Director for the commercial & consumer equipment (C&CE) division, based in Mannheim, Germany. Graham will be responsible for continuing to drive the growth and profitability of Deere's international business.

From left: Graham Williams and Pieter Nel

As C&CE Division Sales Manager of the UK & Ireland branch at Langar, Nottingham since 1993, Graham oversaw a fivefold growth in the grounds care business, making this the largest C&CE branch outside North America.

Graham attended both Latcham and the West of Scotland agricultural colleges, obtaining an NDAGe. He joined John Deere Limited as a territory manager in 1979, and became sales promotion manager in 1987.

Pieter Nel succeeds Graham Williams as C&CE Division Sales Manager for the UK and Ireland, based at Langar. Pieter originally joined the branch last year as Business Development Manager from John Deere (ITY) Limited in Nigel, South Africa, where he served as Manager, Product Support. Pieter joined John Deere in South Africa in 1989 as a Territory Manager and was appointed Manager. Product Support in 1993.

Keith Clayphan succeeds Pieter Nel as Business Development Manager for John Deere Limited. In this position Keith will supervise the company's complete goods department, and will be the branch expert in process management, working with all departments.

He will also lead the development and implementation of quality initiatives such as ISO certification, and will be responsible for managing and co-ordinating the branch's internet activities. Keith returns to Langar from Deere & Company's corporate headquarters in Moline, where he was a Project Manager on the order fulfilment team.

New amenity grass seed group formed

The major breeders and suppliers of amenity grass seed have formed the Amenity Grass Crop Group (AGCG). Members include Advanta Seeds, Barenbrug UK, British Seed Houses, Cebeco Seed Innovations, DLF Perryfields, Nickerson and Semundo.

Paul Johnson, Managing Director of Barenbrug UK, has been appointed as the Chairman and representatives will meet regularly with staff of STRI, at Bingley, which currently undertakes the independent evaluation of newly developed grass cultivars.

The Group will review with the STRI, the existing varieties available and fine-tune testing procedures. Its members will also liaise with end-users to ensure that the needs of industry professionals are being met in terms of amenity grass cultivar performance, and will meet under the auspices of the respected British Society of Plant Breeders.

"Developing new grass varieties takes typically 13 years, and it requires a long-term view to ensure they meet the user's requirements," said Paul.

"The AGCG's role is to monitor industry issues and listen to the views of amenity turf professionals, so that we can effectively set the standards that tomorrow's varieties, and appropriate evaluation procedures, should meet. The Group has already held fruitful meetings with several influential trade groups, and we look forward to gaining the views of others so that breeders and testers fully understand their exact requirements."

Toro dealer celebrates anniversary in style

Toro north of England dealer Cheshire Turf Machinery, in Stockport, has celebrated its fifth anniversary as an independent concern, with the sale of its 1000th machine - to the golf club to which it made its first sale, a Reelmaster 2300-D mower.

The club in question is Birchwood Golf Club, an 18-hole parkland course in Warrington.

Steve Halley, of Cheshire Turf Machinery, said: "The company was established to focus on the grounds care market, we have moved in three different rootzones, two of which are to USGA spec. In addition, our custom-grown service allows you to order any mixture of grasses on any rootzone. For details call Tillers Turf on 01652 678000.

Tee 2 Green in link with ETT

Tee 2 Green and European Turf Technology have announced a collaborative partnership to market several grass seed varieties in the United Kingdom and Middle East.

"We have conducted extensive market research over the past two years through our UK subsidiary and have established that we certainly produce a range of varieties ideally suited to these markets. We need to involve ourselves with a company with direct links to the country's leading golf clubs. ETT fit the bill with their outstanding contacts and highly technical approach they are the ideal partners," said Agostino Gande, Tee 2 Green, Corp. Sales Manager for Europe.

The agreement covers a complete range with several specially designed mixes as well as a custom mixing service and the popular A4 creeping bent. Richard Lawrence Managing Director of European Turf Technology said, "Our philosophy has always been to bring to the market products that have a distinctive technical advantage, we have achieved this through our associations with Florateine Products and Norsk Hydro the world's largest fertiliser company. The Turf-Seed and Tee 2 Green ranges are an ideal addition to our range.

SGM investment

Scottish Grass Machinery has invested £250,000 in two new workshops in Inverness and Aberdeen to support contracts recently won with Highland and Aberdeenshire Councils.

The new facilities will provide equipment and a full customer service, delivered by two dedicated engineers in each depot, supporting both the two council contracts as well as providing on-site support to SGM's golf customers across the North of Scotland.

Frontline: Graham Williams and Pieter Nel
A major new training scheme for the UK groundcare machinery industry is being launched by John Deere Limited, in conjunction with Brookby Melton College in Leicestershire, with the approval of BAGMA and the City & Guilds of London Institute, and the support of the Learning & Skills Council.

The only scheme of its kind in the groundcare industry, the John Deere Turf Tech apprenticeship training programme has been developed to assist dealers and their service departments in the recruitment and training of suitably skilled technicians. It is based on a similar John Deere scheme that has already been operating successfully in agriculture since 1992, and which won a National Training Award at the end of 1997.

Turf Tech is a four-year block release course at Brookby Melton College, leading to the BAGMA City & Guilds of London Institute 4024 Agricultural / Groundcare Service Engineers NVQ Level 2 & 3 Certificates, and the John Deere Turf Tech Certificate.

The standard three year apprenticeship will cover all the normal engineering principles and systems, and include regular sessions at the John Deere Training Centre in Langar. During the additional fourth year, the trainee works at the sponsoring John Deere dealership, and attends at least three service schools at the John Deere Training Centre.

Successful completion of the fourth year of the scheme also qualifies technicians for Associate Membership of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers, and registration as Eng Tech with The Engineering Council.

The first intake of students, who need to be resident in the UK, sponsored by a John Deere dealer and aged 16 or over, is planned for September 2002. Anyone interested in applying will be able to obtain a brochure outlining the scheme from Brookby Melton College, area careers officers, John Deere Limited at Langar, Nottingham, and John Deere dealers nationwide.

Trilo buys Long Equipment range

MJT Contracts Ltd and Trilo have added the Long Equip range to their own range of Trilo Vacuum Sweepers. All production has been moved to the factory in Holland with MJT continuing the supply of parts and machines to the UK. The range has been “thinned down” to the successful collectors and sand spreaders, other machines may be made on request as all drawings are held by Trilo. The company is hoping that the reputation of both TRILOS and Long machines will go hand in hand for a stable future and ask customers to bear with them while we gear production of machines and parts up to the standard expected by existing Trilo customers. They are holding some parts in stock and hope to have things back in operation within six to eight weeks with full production being resumed by Salsete at the latest.

Sportsworld seminar a great success

David Bates (left) gets up to his elbows in a demonstration of hydraulic conductivity at the Sportsworld Amenity-sponsored North Wales Section Seminar at Garden Park, chaired by Bill Lawson and with speakers including Peter Wibawey, of the EGU; Duncan McGilvary, of Potters Bar GC, Ken Richardson, of BIGGA, several speakers from Sportsworld Amenity as well as Colin Hood, from Torfrax, the audience was treated to a wide ranging array of topics.

Great news for Woodlands

The Forestry Commission has changed its Woodland Improvement Grant giving more opportunity to golf courses to access grant aid for the management of their woodland.

The grant is split into 3 units: WIG1 for Public Access, WIG2 for Undermanaged Woodland and WIG3 for Biodiversity. It is WIG2 and WIG3 that are generally of interest to golf clubs, previously uneconomic thinning was not applicable for grant aid under WIG2. This has now changed and therefore golf courses with woodland should now be eligible for 50% of the agreed costs to bring their woodland back to environmentally acceptable levels. This grant has a ceiling limit of £10,000 in grant assistance.

WIG3 has also been restructured with a new ceiling limit of £50,000 in grant aid. This is available to clients wishing to improve the biodiversity of their woodlands providing it is in accordance with either, the National or Local Biodiversity Action Plan, a Habitat Action Plan or a Species Action Plan. The grant gives a 50% contribution towards agreed costs. For further information please contact John Nicholson Associates at:-

South Wales Seminar well supported

Pictured at the South Wales Seminar are Professor Bill Adams, David Ward, Head Greenkeeper at Royal Porthcawl GC, Simon Barnaby, Scott’s Technical Manager and Martin Townsend, Scott’s Sales Manager. The event was very well supported and the South Wales Section would like to thank Scotts for their very generous sponsorship of the event.

June 2002 Greenkeeper International
In defence of the Higher National Diploma

With reference to the April issue of the magazine, I was pleased to read the letter written by Ian Charnley. I fully endorse Ian's comments and wish to convey my experience in trying to fulfil an ambition of making my passion of golf into a career.

At the age of 18 and on completion of my A levels I attended a full-time Higher National Diploma course in Golf Course Management at Cattlin College. The three-year course consisted of six monthly study periods followed by a further four months in a first job on a golf course to gain valuable practical experience. In reading Ian's letter it is disappointing to learn that BIGGA offers HND/Higher National Diploma courses to attend in a part-time basis as all VQ courses are attended full-time as assessment must be 'at work on the job'.

This is not the case. The golf course industry, like any other, has a variety of work options to suit the individual. This is why, for instance, we award NVQs. I have noticed in my experience that to be truly successful in the industry, the individual must be willing to learn in a variety of different situations. This is why NVQs are so important.

The qualification followed by a lower level qualification plus practical experience as an alternative. Why does this not happen within the Greenkeeping Industry? I believe that until those in responsible positions within the UK Golf Industry stop to pay the minimum wage for "grass cutters" the Greenkeeping profession will not attract the young people who could help it flourish and recreate the image of the greenkeeper.

A casing point was in the same edition of the magazine where one of the UK's most prestigious courses advertised for Greenkeeping staff, "with no experience necessary". If the prestigious courses do not ask for qualified staff / qualifications what direction is the course going? 

Vandalism – What can you do?

The day after Easter Monday Jon Selwood, Course Manager at Abridge Golf Club in Essex, returned to work after his Easter break. It started off as a normal day but during the afternoon Jon walking past the 13th green, the nearest to his sheds, noticed a zigzag strip of discolorated grass right through the heart of the green from one end to the other. A closer inspection made it obvious that the green had been sprayed with an unknown chemical which turned out to be paraquat. Jon hoped that as the green was quite close to a country lane with easy access to the course that the 13th was the sole victim of the attack.

Jon and his Deputy, Geoff Smith, did a tour of the course and the full extent of the attack was slowly revealed - 11 greens, seven tees and three approaches plus various other areas of fine turf on the golf course had been attacked by a paraquat based knapsack sprayer full of paraquat. Generally all of the spraying had been done in a zigzag although some across tees were in a broad straight line.

Was responsible for this attack? The fact that whoever did it was well equipped and without some knowledge of the equipment and the chemical he was using probably rules out "spur of the moment" vandalism finishing up a good night out on the beer. But, of course, the deeper that you look the more sinister it becomes.

Abridge Golf Club is a Jewish Club and our course sits in the heart of this very picturesque countryside. They have hosted BIGGA events and are great supporters of the Association. With all of the troubles in the world at present the fact that the club and our strong Jewish connections may be relevant.

But there is more! The Club is about to undergo considerable changes which have been widely reported in the local press. A deal has been struck with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club whereby Spurs will be entitled to 35 Corporate Members. Spurs have bought land adjoining the Golf Club and are planning to build new training grounds, soccer academy and other facilities there. The name of the Golf Club is to be changed to Tottenham and Abridge Golf Club and the Club will receive a substantial amount of money. These changes alone provide a motive for another several thousand rival football fans!

There are also other possibilities. The list goes on and on. Not knowing the source of this attack on his course is one of the most worrying to the Course Manager. Will they strike again? When will they strike next time? It is impossible to know the answers and almost impossible to guard against any future attack. As all connected with golf realise a golf course in a rural area is an extremely valuable asset and a target for both legal and illegal damage.

Jon has been Course Manager at Abridge for five years. Each year the standard of the golf course has improved and it would be fair to say that it was following a "Lottinville" that the integrated big attack came. Jon has been a member of BIGGA for five years and included in his letter that NVQs are "the flavour of the month". NVQs are a competence based qualification and, provided the fact that only 20% of those, who completed their HND in my year, are still in the industry. BGIGA's aim should be encouraging Greenkeepers and Course Managers to improve their knowledge and experience. I have been very fortunate as I received continued support from all the staff. I have worked on during my training period and, more recently, from the respective managers at Minchinhampton and Crescenter Golf Clubs. I have also had the opportunity to obtain my spraying certificates and participated in NVQ qualifications 10 supplement my HND. I have no problem with this approach as an Industry competencies based qualification. I have recently compared BIGGA job adverts with other professional/technical magazines and noted that for Supervisory/Management posts the norm is to request the highest appropriate Industry recognised qualification followed by a lower level qualification plus practical experience as an alternative. Why does this not happen within the Greenkeeping Industry? I believe that until those in responsible positions within the UK Golf Industry stop to pay the minimum wage for "grass cutters" the Greenkeeping profession will not attract the young people who could help it flourish and recreate the image of the greenkeeper.

A casing point was in the same edition of the magazine where one of the UK's most prestigious courses advertised for Greenkeeping staff, "with no experience necessary". If the prestigious courses do not ask for qualified staff / qualifications what direction is the course going? 

This sort of statement also totally disillusions those of us who would love to work at such a golf course and apply their theoretical knowledge and training to ensure an environment where presentation and quality of work is a primary objective. My final point concerns the UK Greenkeeping Industry as a whole. Generally, Greenkeepers have little status or receive any recognition for the work they do from the users of their product, i.e. the Club Members. Indeed, little is done to keep the public informed about the work of the Greenkeepers. Better would be that he is apprehended and punished by the justice system. In the meantime let us all hope that the weather conditions that have been so extreme and unpredictable in recent years since "the perfect spring and early summer to get everything back to normal as quickly as possible. 

Derek Ferrington

Address your letters to: Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York Y061 1UF, or email them to: scott@bigga.co.uk
Arne Van Amerongen reports from his latest port of call – Calabria in Italy

CALABRIA
A NEW GOLFWING FRONTIER

I did not know this region of Italy when I arrived to oversee the construction of the nine hole course in Southern Calabria so it was a real challenge and a very gratifying experience for me.

The population of Calabria is approximately two million and the project is being built in a region with a precarious economy. The city of Reggio Calabria boasts a national airport with daily flights from Rome and Milan and a population of 180,000.

The Montechiarello golf course which brought me to the area is being built in a small village called Orti’ in the hinterland of Reggio and mainly due to the initiative of nine local investors.

The project is at an altitude of 750 metres with a magnificent view over Sicily. Furthermore the Straits of Messina, the Etna and the Eolie islands can all be seen from the clubhouse from where you can also see the magnificent view which embraces the 1st hole with its artificial lake, the Calabrian coastline and the Straits of Messina (photo no.1).

One of the first problems I encountered was the recruitment of experienced personnel and related machinery. Some of the work was executed manually, as big stones were transported with wheelbarrows to the shores of one of the three artificial lakes (photo no. 2).

One of the three artificial lakes was completed after 2 weeks work and has a total surface of 5000 m2 with a total volume of 25,000 m3.

Water is extremely important in this type of climate in order to maintain the turf to a high standard.

The two photographs show the 6th hole before (photo no. 4) and during construction (photo no. 5). The 6th is a Par 3 of 121 yards. Each hole was designed and integrated into the existing landscape in order to preserve a complete harmony with the surrounding environment.

It took just five months to construct the driving range, six holes and the irrigation system. As is usual in Calabria, and especially after such a lot of hard work, a break with good wine and excellent food is organised by the construction personnel (photo no. 6).

The Montechiarello will also include tennis courts, a swimming pool, horse paddocks and a hotel which still have to be constructed.

It is just the first of a number of similar developments intends to build six new 18 hole courses in Calabria over the next few years.

The Calabrian climate allows golf to be played for 12 months in the year. Calabria could really become a new promised land for golf.

On the left, we can see Peter Harradine the Golf Course Architect who designed this course, on the right Architect Filippo Barbaro the Promoter of the project and in the middle Arne Van Amerongen the Project Supervisor and author of this article (photo no. 7).
Education and Training Feedback

Sami and I are very busy putting together the Education and Training Programme, Continue to Learn 2003, which will be held in Harrogate from 20 to 23 January 2003.

Following the success of Continue to Learn 2002, the education and training programme for BIGGA’s week in Harrogate, in January 2003 will continue to offer delegates plenty of choice.

The week commences on Monday, January 20, with the National Education Conference and Workshop Programme. Planned Workshops include two 2 day Workshops: Golf Course Design and Construction 2 and Environmental Management.

There will also be a one day Soil Science workshop held on both Monday 20 and Tuesday, January 21. A further option for all greenkeepers involved in or contemplating joining the Master Greenkeeper Scheme, will be a one day Master Greenkeeper seminar.

The Programme has, again, been designed to give delegates plenty of choice to make the most from their time in Harrogate with speakers from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia.

Remember that BTME opens on Tuesday, January 21. BTME Seminars will be held on Wednesday, January 22 and Thursday, January 23. Seminars will be concentrated around the middle of each day, giving delegates the chance to visit the Exhibition and take in some or all Seminars.

The National Education Conference includes four sessions over two days covering Management Skills for the Golf Course Manager and Practical On-Course Management. Watch out in further editions of this magazine and on the BIGGA Web Site for more details of speakers and how to book your place.

This month sees the start of the journey to select the TORO Student of the Year 2003, when the judges will visit Scotland, the North, the South East, the South West and the Midlands to interview 33 Students. Up to eight Regional Finalists will be selected to progress to the National Final, which will be held at BIGGA House on Monday, September 23.

The judging tour begins in Edinburgh on Monday, June 24. We are still waiting for your requests for training in the Sections and Regions to come pouring in. We have had a good response from some sections and from one Region. However, we are still only training at a very low price, thanks to subsidies from the BIGGA Education and Development Fund then contact your Section Secretary, Regional Administrator or us here at BIGGA HOUSE to make sure that your course is provided. Remember that all Golden Key companies will have £30 training vouchers to give away to their customers from September. These vouchers can be used to pay for BIGGA Training Courses or be used towards the cost of Workshops, the National Education Conference or Seminars at Harrogate next January.

Due to popular demand, I have decided to end the Key Skills Corner. Anyone wishing to obtain the answer to last month’s poser should contact me at BIGGA HOUSE.

You’ve got mail!

If you’ve got an email account why not send an email to the education department, where we can place you into our exclusive education email address book. We can then keep you up-to-date with education news and events as they happen.

Send an email to: education@bigga.co.uk ken@bigga.co.uk sami@bigga.co.uk

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