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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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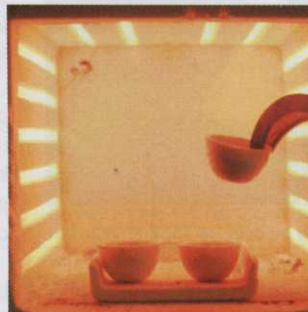
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NEW THIS MONTH!

Check out the Buyers' Guide on page 56-60.

For ways in which D CRANE SPORTSTURF and LAUDERDALE ENGINEERING can help you!



Welcome

WATER, WATER NOWHERE

June and July were dry months for a great many parts of the country and inevitably it resulted in the usual headlines about drought, hosepipe bans and water conservation.

Following on from that I received a call at BIGGA HOUSE from the BBC Radio 4 programme You and Yours wanting information on the amount of water used by the average golf course and asking about the reasons why golf courses used water. Reading between the lines I could tell that golf was being seen as an abuser of H2O and one of the main villains of the peace.

I explained how irrigation systems were so much more sophisticated now than ever before; how "over watering" was just that and that Course Managers were aiming to produce as healthy a grass plant as was possible, which didn't mean giving it a right good soaking on a regular basis.

I also pointed out that it was often golfers who put pressure on greenkeepers to water courses in a bid to stop their expensive watering systems lying idle and making the grass a darker shade of green. That was fine and the point was reinforced by Euan Grant, who took time out of his arduous Open schedule to be interviewed for the programme and did a fine job in putting over some pertinent points to balance the argument. However, it still doesn't get away from the fact that as soon as the chips were down golf emerged as Public Enemy Number 1.

As much as anything it is a problem of perception. Non golfers, even some club golfers, believe that golf is a widespread abuser of water and we have got to get the message across that, as in every other aspect of course management, we are responsible.

You do however get some very green, soft, golf courses, so perhaps we can use the fact that the spotlight is currently on the game to our advantage. Those clubs with memberships keen to get as much use out of their irrigation systems as possible and play on lush green Augusta-like courses might now be in a position to be persuaded that less is better when it comes to watering.

I don't personally believe that golf is as big a culprit as the general public is being led to believe but if we can encourage golfers that irrigation systems are superb tools and great safety nets and not daily workhorses it will make the job of defending the game that much easier.

I can't leave my column this month without paying tribute to the aforementioned Euan Grant, Gordon Moir and their superb team at St Andrews. The Old Course looked fabulous and played as well as any links course could - the fairways were stimping faster than the greens on the Sunday - and the leader board on the final day reflected the fact that the examination that had been set had identified the finest golfers. Sure, due to the fast running nature, there were many drivable par-4s but even in the perfect weather with wonderfully smooth putting surfaces the low score of the week was a respectable 65.

Well done to all.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

THE AFRICAN WAY

Stefan Antolik has ended 35 years as a British Greenkeeper as he jets off for a new challenge in South Africa.

A former Sussex Secretary, Stefan will move to warmer climes with his wife, Sue, and daughter, Samantha, to Aberdeen, where they will set up and run a Bed & Breakfast and self catering apartments. Bitten by the bug of greenkeeping at the age of 15, Stefan will continue



to work in the industry as a Golf Course Consultant.

Stefan will leave Cooden Beach Golf Club after 15 years' service, a period that has witnessed much personal success for the Africa bounded greenkeeper. In his time he hosted the BIGGA National Tournament, won the Essay Writing Competition, claimed the Greenkeeper of the Year trophy in 1994 and was declared Sussex Greenkeeper of the Year in 2003.

"I'm looking forward to the move. It will be different other there with oil based greens but greenkeepers adapt, that's what they do best, and I'll do the same. I have had some great times in greenkeeping in Britain and I will miss it. What I wouldn't miss is the traffic congestion and weather," joked Stefan.

OLD COURSE FACES NEW TRIAL



The Open may well be over for another year, but this month the St Andrews Links courses will be the location for a very different set of trials. The prestigious Open Championship course will be working with WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme) to test a novel use for recycled glass that literally turns bottles into bunker sand.

Processed sand, the product on test, is made

from recycled green glass and it will be used in practice bunkers as part of a three month trial, during which players will be encouraged to provide feedback. If successful, the trials could be extended in the future to one of the club's courses to assess its use in 'real play' situations.

The processed sand is also being trialled as a path material. Being a links course, sand is used for many of the paths at St Andrews and performance benefits, including better drainage, mean that the processed sand is likely to provide firmer underfoot conditions.

"We are delighted to be working with WRAP on these trials to assess the performance of processed sand. St Andrews is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment and using recycled materials clearly offers us the opportunity to reduce our environmental impact," said Gordon Moir, Links Superintendent.

BSG'S NEW DEALER

BSG Tractors and Machinery Ltd have appointed R.C. Setchfield Ltd of Grantham, Lincolnshire, as a dealer for its complete range of products, with R.C. Setchfield opening a new depot in Staverley, near Chesterfield, shortly.

Richard Setchfield is Managing Director of RC Setchfield and heads a team of 17 staff. Established in 1982 as an agricultural machinery dealership, Richard moved into equipment for land management and in 2001 was awarded the JCB Land Power Machinery franchise for materials handling equipment. He also handles the JCB FastTrak range of tractors.

"We are very pleased to be appointed a dealer for BSG. R.C. Setchfield will now be able to offer its customers a 'one stop shop' for all their equipment needs," said Richard.

Graham Godward, Managing Director of BSG, is also very enthusiastic about the new arrangement. "Working together with R. C. Setchfield will be a very positive development for both our companies," he said.



SALISBURY SERVICE CELEBRATED

25 years and still greatly enjoying it was the message from David Salisbury as he celebrated a quarter of a century of service at Burghley Park Golf Club as Course Manager. As a mark of the achievement, the club held a Silver Jubilee Golf Day in David's honour.

In the trade for 33 years, Burghley Park is only David's second greenkeeping job, but it could have been so different for this modest man. A qualified electrical engineer, David worked as a Site Manager on building projects in Birmingham up until 1972. The knock on effects of the coal strikes at the time forced him to look for alternate work and it became a toss up between a greenkeeper at Burton on Trent GC or a gardener at a local school. Luckily for greenkeeping Burton got in first and David has never looked back, being promoted to Head Greenkeeper in 1977 and then moving onto Burghley in 1980, where he has turned the course around entirely.

"When I joined we didn't have one tree or sand bunker on the course, it was just a piece of grass land. Sheep grazed on the course resulting in electric fencing being placed around all the greens. I like to think we have moved the course on since then," said David proudly, who has worked with no less than 11 Greens Chairmen during his 25 years.

Moved on is certainly what they have done, the sheep are no longer residents, the fencing has come down, sand bunkers are strategically littered around the course and trees are plentiful, adding



L-R: John Magman, Club Chairman, Paul Wilkinson, Greens Chairman, and Gary Salisbury, David's son and Burghley Park greenkeeper, with David.

much character to this testing course. This has all been done with five staff.

"I've been luckily to have worked with some excellent members at the club, which has allowed me to push the course forward, make needed changes and really develop it. I have had their support throughout my time here and have also had some great staff on my side.

"It's funny, this celebration feels like it's the end of an era, but it's only the start. There is plenty more to do here and I plan to develop the course further within the next 10 or so years."

BACK TO GRASS ROOTS

Andrew Bowey, Course Manager at Oake Manor Golf Club, has recently enrolled two new Greenkeepers on the Modern Apprenticeship scheme. These are David Horrell, 19, originally from Cheltenham, and Charlotte Pring, 16, from Hillfarrance.

Charlotte is following in her father's footsteps, as Nigel Pring was the Course Manager at Oake from the opening of the course 12 years ago. He left the course five years ago and is now the Course Manager of Farrington Golf Club, North Somerset.

"It's a real novelty having Charlotte here. Not just because of the history of her dad working here, but mainly due to the fact that there are very few ladies within the industry. The last time I had any involvement with a lady Greenkeeper was when I was assessing NVQ students at the Belfry many moons ago. There appears to be only a hand full of female greenkeepers in the whole of the southwest. Therefore I am very pleased and proud to have Charlotte on the team," said Andrew.



Oake Manor Greens Team; Back row: First Assistant John Byrne, Ben Scully, Ian Larcombe and Deputy Course Manager James Williams. Front row: David Horrell, Course Manager Andrew Bowey, and Charlotte Pring

David and Charlotte will be studying for their NVQ level two in Greenkeeping over the next two years. Andrew has high expectations for them both and is looking forward to them starting College in October at Cannington College.

GLASS ALWAYS GREENER

Allerton Municipal Golf Course in South Liverpool has become the first Merseyside club to pilot bunker sand made entirely from finely crushed recycled glass.

The scheme has also been rolled out to two other clubs, Caldy on the Wirral and Blundells Hill Golf Course, in St Helens, in what are the United Kingdom's first full scale trials of recycled glass in bunkers. Organisers are looking for feedback from both greenkeepers and players.

The six month pilot has been organised by the Clean Merseyside Centre, a not-for-profit organisation that works to develop alternative markets for recycled products and materials in Merseyside. The trial aims to build on research carried out last year by STRI, which was funded by WRAP. But the scheme is not only helping Allerton's commitment to going greener it's also reaping benefits for players.

"It's early days and the bunker is performing OK so far. Nobody has come up to any of my greenkeepers and made any comment, so it's obviously as good as normal sand as far as they're concerned," said Dave McCormack, Head Greenkeeper at Allerton.

INDEPENDENT INSPIRATION



Tim Lodge, Senior Agronomist with the STRI, has left the Institute to set up his own independent turf consultancy, Agrostis. Agrostis, based in Suffolk, will cover the whole of

the South of England, going north to Nottingham and west to Bristol.

Dr Lodge, who has been with the STRI for over 16 years, gaining a PhD in the construction, irrigation and nutrition of golf greens in 1994, has extensive experience in all technical areas of turf management, including golf, football, rugby, polo, cricket, parks and gardens.

"This is a great chance to advise on all aspects of sport and amenity turf rather than be confined to just one area. Agrostis will tackle any turf, either to recommend treatment for specific problems or take a new project from feasibility study through construction and build. Most turf practitioners are passionate about grass, and my aim is to inspire them to enhance the turf they look after, both for their own pleasure and that of others," said an excited Tim.

TRILO MOVE ACTIVITY

Trilo have announced that their sales activity will move into Trilo UK Ltd.

"Trilo UK has been trading along side MJT Contracts Ltd for over 10 years. It seemed the right time to move the business and consolidate the two together. We now have Trilo BV for Europe and Trilo USA Inc for North America, it seemed only right to move over to Trilo UK for the UK and Ireland. We continue to work very closely with the factory and to push the global brand forward," said Tim Merrell, Managing Director of both MJT Contracts Ltd and Trilo UK.

NEW TERRITORY FOR QUINTON



John Quinton has been appointed Territory Manager at RS Bird Ltd, the Ransomes Jacobsen dealer for south and mid Wales, based at Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan. John will be

responsible for turf maintenance equipment sales and support throughout the region.

For the past three years John held the position of Machinery Supervisor and then Machinery Manager at Glendale, based in Preston, and prior to that farmed tobacco in Zimbabwe. He is a graduate of Harper Adams University College in Shropshire, where he gained a HND in agricultural engineering. He lives in Monmouth with his wife, Victoria, and their one year old daughter, Sophie.

Commenting on his appointment Jeffrey Bird said: "John joins us at a particularly buoyant time for the company and his hands on experience will certainly add strength to our management team. I am delighted to welcome him on board and I'm sure that he will be a valuable asset as we continue to grow the business."

TWO BECOME ONE

Vitax Ltd has acquired the business and assets of Supaturf Products.

Supaturf, who have been working closely with American manufacturers Aquatrols, has taken their water management products Primer and Revolution to a strong position in the UK market place and are working almost as partners in Europe, the two companies have built up substantial European business.

"We are looking forward to continuing the close working relationship with Aquatrols and developing further UK business within the Local Authority sector, via Supaturf's extensive, national distribution network," said David Griffiths, Chairman of Leicester based Vitax.

JOHN DEERE AGREE WITH SGM HIRE

John Deere Limited has signed a new five year preferred supplier agreement with SGM Hire, covering a wide range of commercial ground care machinery from the John Deere range. These include front rotary mowers, X Series diesel lawn tractors, 900 triplex cylinder mowers, compact tractors and Gator utility vehicles, as well as golf course equipment.

This nationwide agreement covers a number of John Deere commercial & consumer equipment (C&CE) dealers who will supply equipment for the SGM Hire fleet in their own sales areas, and provide full parts and service support.

Steven McInroy, Managing Director of SGM Hire, said: "At SGM Hire, our long term strategy is to establish solid working relationships with both our customers and the key suppliers in our market place. We are delighted to expand our product range with such a high calibre manufacturer, and that this agreement will allow our customers greater access to the John Deere range of products."

David Hart, John Deere's C&CE Division Manager, added: "Over the last two years SGM Hire has bought approaching £3 million worth of John Deere equipment for its UK hire fleet. This new agreement both confirms and looks to build upon our existing, successful working relationship."



L-R: C&CE Division Manager, David Hart, and Territory Manager, Nick Ashman, of John Deere Limited, with SGM General Manager, Andrew Kirk, and MD, Steven McInroy

MILESTONE HIT

New Holland recently celebrated the completion of the 100,000th compact tractor to be made at its dedicated manufacturing plant in Dublin, Georgia, in the USA.

More than 100 staff and local officials cheered as the momentous machine, a 40hp TC40A model resplendent with '100,000th Tractor' stencilled on

the back, rolled off the production line.

It was driven out by Jody Brookes Jr, one of ten employees who have worked at the Dublin factory since its opening in 1996. Today the plant employs more than 100, making New Holland compact tractors for shipment throughout the world and the New Holland Groundcare range is sold and serviced



in the UK by more than 50 dedicated dealerships.

"We are a proud part of the community and we have 100,000 reasons to show our contribution to Dublin, Georgia," said Plant Manager, Barry Ruffalo.

INCREASE AT TGA SHOW

The TGA Show saw 450 individuals visit the event, which was held at Fineturf in Lincolnshire at the end of June. 290 had visited the previous show two years ago, with 40 exhibitors in 2005 compared to 30 in 2003.

The bi-annual outdoor event showcased the latest equipment and hi-tech machines dedicated to the producers of turf, such as turf harvesters, while turf maintenance kit was also on display on the various stands around the site. The Show also allowed the TGA to outline their manifesto for 2006 to

its members and the press, along with their plans to transfer Chief Executive powers to the PVGA - Processed Vegetable Growers' Association.



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CHANGES AT STEWARTSTURF



John Heaphy

Stewartsturf has unveiled changes to their Area Sales Management team. Blair Young has been promoted to Area Sales Manager for Stewartsturf, while John Heaphy has been appointed as Area Manager in central Scotland, the Borders and northern England.

Blair, who plays golf off 4 and whose hometown is Carnoustie, worked as a greenkeeper and groundsman before he joined Stewart Groundcare. When an opportunity arose within the sales team he jumped at it and has not looked back since.

John brings a wealth of experience to the company, not least BASIS accreditation, and he holds a Diploma in Agriculture from Edinburgh. He has very wide experience, particularly in pesticides and fertilisers, and has worked in Scotland, England and East Africa.

"It's great we can attract people of John's calibre. He will bring a lot to the party at this exciting time for the company. Blair is already making a significant impact within his area and has a great future within the business," said Sales Manager, Kenny Archibald.



Blair Young

STRI PLAY HOST

STRI played host to 98 international researchers from the ITRC (International Turfgrass Research Conference) on a glorious sunny day in Bingley recently.

The ITRC conference, organised by the International Turfgrass Society, is held every four years.

This year was the 10th conference and the main programme was held in Llandudno, North Wales. The first conference, held in Harrogate in 1969, was co-hosted by STRI.

The visitors enjoyed a combined presentation from STRI's Soils and Sports Surface Science team and the Turfgrass Biology and Environment team, followed by a tour of the trials grounds. The party then drove back over the Pennines to pay a visit to the City of Manchester Stadium, home to Manchester City FC; the pitch was designed and project managed by STRI in 2003.

MAKE HEGGIE'S A DOUBLE

The Scottish National Tournament took place over McDonald Golf Club, Ellon, Aberdeenshire on Thursday June 23.

McDonald Golf Club is the home course of the North's Chairman, John Geddes, and he certainly had the course in excellent condition despite the horrendous wet weather this area had experienced this year. On the day the conditions could not have been better, with a slight breeze but bright and overhead conditions.

Our thanks go to Alan Barker, Captain of McDonald GC, and the Committee for granting us the courtesy and facilities of their clubhouse and golf course. Also Sandra Brockie, Secretary, who gave her assistance prior to and during the Championship. Finally, to Margaret and George in the clubhouse for providing us with superb service. Alan Barker and Iain Barr, Scottish Chairman, gave a vote of thanks on behalf of all the competitors, and presented the prizes.

Results: SGGG Challenge Cup. Scratch. Scottish Champion. Brian Heggie, Auchterarder GC, 73. Friendship Trophy. Best Nett. Mark Main, Moray, 72. Ransomes Trophy. First Class. James

McCormack, Kirriemuir, 72; Kenneth Mitchell, St. Andrews, 73; Kevin Thomson, Moray, 74 BIH. Pattison Trophy. Second Class. Stewart McBain, Hazelhead, 72; Iain Barr, Largs, 74; Dale Robertson, Newmachar, 76. STRI Trophy. Third Class. Kenneth Andersen, Unattached, 73; Brian Hunter, McDonald, 77; Hugh McLatchie, Peterhead, 81. Dick Aitken Trophy. Best Head Greenkeeper. George Mitchell, Newmachar, 73.

M&M Trophy. Best Assistant. Bradley Wood, Westhill, 73 BIH. Souter Trophy. Best Apprentice. Scott Davidson, Hazelhead, 77. SIGGA Trophy. Best Veteran. Elliott Small, Life Member, 75. St. Mungo Trophy. Team Trophy (Best 4 Nett scores). North Section, Stewart McBain, Hazelhead, 72; James McCormack, Kirriemuir, 72; Mark Main, Moray, 72; Bradley Wood, Westhill, 73; Total 289.

Patrons. Pat Allan, Stewarts, 71.

Qualifiers for BIGGA National Championship. Brian Heggie, Auchterarder, and Mark Main, Moray. Guest. George Simpson, Oldmeldrum, 69. Nearest the Pin. D. Gray, Pines.

Peter J. Boyd - Regional Administrator



Scottish National Tournament prize winners with Scottish Chairman Iain Barr

FLYING THE NEST

Despite the perception of some members, greenkeepers are a friendly bunch and are always welcoming. If not all humans have yet to pick up on this, our feathered friends certainly have, as more and more birds choose the greenkeeping facilities as ideal homes. Ian Stephens, Course Manager at Retford GC, first noticed spotted flycatchers were on the golf course in the last week of May, but it wasn't until the first week in June that he noticed a pair were getting very interested in the club's work compound area.

It was around this time that Ian and his team spotted materials being built up on top of a post stationed right by the main door into the shed. This increased in size until some detection work established it was the 'spofles', a name given to the birds by the green staff, who had made the nest.

As of a mid Friday in July the team noticed they had four very healthy young birds, although they grew so fast that by

the following Monday they had flown the nest.

"They now have some sort of cult status on the course with the members who are also keeping a keen eye on them. Over the winter we may just have to put up some nest boxes around for them, as the post they are on is very vulnerable. I would say to anyone out there who has the room and space to really try to encourage the birds onto the course, as the rewards that you get back are superb," said a pleased and eagle eyed Ian.



FURTHER NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Barenbrug's plan to further expand its business in Scotland and the north of England has been given an additional boost with the appointment of another new distributor, Turfcare Specialists Ltd, TSL, based in Consett, Co. Durham. The company

will be distributing Barenbrug's BAR range of grass seed to the amenity market in the north of England.

TSL has been trading for over 20 years and employs 10 staff. It sells a wide range of amenity products, such as grass seed, chemicals and fertilisers, to the golf, sport and landscaping market. In addition, TSL has a contracting side, which specialises in the renovation of all types of sports turf.

"We are delighted to be working with Barenbrug because they have been a high profile seed supplier for many years and their quality is well known. I have known their Scotland Operations Manager, Billy Nimmo, for many years and it's good to be working with him again," said Terry Charlton, Managing Director of TSL.



L-R: Billy Nimmo, Barenbrug, with TSL's Karen Hopper and Terry Charlton

THE BIG EASY

When the dust settles on another successful and busy BTME & ClubHouse in January 2006, there will not be much time to recover before the start of the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in America. Once again the BIGGA Delegation, sponsored by Bernhard & Co., is giving 10 greenkeepers the chance to visit the Show for free.

The Delegation is open to all BIGGA members and all you have to do to enter is fill in the wrap around form attached to this month's Greenkeeper International. Once you have completed the form, send it back to BIGGA HOUSE and you will be automatically entered into the second stage of the competition. It is just that simple. If, for any reason, you do not have a form please phone

BIGGA HOUSE on 01347 833800 to request an application.

Held in the Big Easy, New Orleans, February 9-11, the GCSAA Event is expecting more than 22,000 golf industry professionals for the 2006 Show. This will feature approximately 850 exhibitors over more than 270,000 net square feet of exhibit space. GCSAA and NGCOA (National Golf Course Owners Association) will be presenting their annual education conferences, GCSAA's Education Conference will take place on February 6-11, while NGCOA's Solutions Summit will be held on February 7-11, during the Industry Show.



IRELAND AND HAMPSHIRE COVERED



R-L: John Hanley, Patrick Hanley, Groundcare Sales Manager; Sam Thompson and David Austin, Sales Executive.

Hampshire horticultural machinery firm Carters of Swanwick Ltd has been appointed sales and service dealer for the entire range of Kubota tractors and groundcare equipment.

"We have a loyal and dedicated team at Duncan Road, Swanwick. We intend to work very hard to extend Kubota's presence throughout southern and central Hampshire amongst domestic customers, estate owners and professionals working within the agricultural, horticultural and groundcare

industries," stated David Jacobs, Carters of Swanwick's Managing Director.

Meanwhile family firm J F Hanley has been appointed Kubota tractor and groundcare dealer for the Connacht region of Ireland. Operating from premises at Ballydooley, Roscommon, J F Hanley is now providing sales, service and parts support to customers for the full range of Kubota compact tractors and matching implements, ride-on petrol and diesel mowers, and the RTV900 all-terrain utility vehicle, which was launched in May

this year. The area covered by the company encompasses the counties of Roscommon, Galway, Leitrim, Mayo and Sligo.

"The company comprises a dedicated team of skilled and experienced staff determined to deliver consistent first-class service and support to all Kubota customers - past, present and future. I will be providing sales, technical and demonstration assistance to J F Hanley, as and when required," said Sam Thompson, Kubota's Area Sales Manager for Ireland.

SUSTAINABLE GOLF FORUM LAUNCHED

The European Forum for Sustainable Golf, a major new initiative designed to assist the European golf sector in addressing environmental sustainability issues, has been launched in Brussels by the Committed to Green Foundation. The launch was marked by the personal attendance of top officials from the European Commission, WWF International, the European Golf Association, the International Olympic Committee Sport and Environment Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme and BIGGA.

The European Forum for Sustainable Golf is an independently operated, stakeholder led initiative that will provide a centre for information exchange between organisations; improve cohesion of environmental strategies within golf; assist in the identification of priority sustainability issues to be addressed and develop partnership projects to do so; promote new environmental innovation within golf; promote environmental initiatives and practices carried out within golf to external organisations and the public; provide a credible interface between golf, government regulators and environmental NGO's.

ARE YOU TOUGH ENOUGH?

A BIGGA Select Team will again clash with the Combined Services in a Scratch Challenge competition this year. Monday October 17 is the date for match, which will be hosted by Burton on Trent Golf Club and played in a Ryder Cup format.

The inaugural contest was fought over the two courses at The Berkshire Golf Club in 2004. Despite many close matches, BIGGA went down 10½ to 1½ and the Association will be keen to exact revenge in 2005 at the East Midlands course prepared by Gavin Robson.

If you are a scratch golfer and wish to be considered for selection for the BIGGA team contact Peter Larter, Regional Administrator, on 01476 550115 or email Petelarter972@aol.com.

CRANE CONSTRUCTING EXPANSION

D Crane Sportsturf Construction has taken on Iain Watson. Derrick Crane has been operating in sportsturf construction for 16 years, in Cheshire and the north west area and, with the addition of Iain to the team, the company are using Iain's experience to expand further.

The construction business will be offering a full renovation package consisting of verti draining, coring, scarifying, overseeding, koroing and sand spreading, while offering the current full construction service.



David Golding outlines the GTC's new learning materials to aid in the study of N/SVQ Level 2 and 3.

Have you attended college to learn about greenkeeping or are you one of many who are working on a golf course thinking I would love to gain more theory about my job but for one reason or another I cannot attend college?

Well no problem, the GTC, with the support of senior greenkeepers and college lecturers, have compiled all the theory required into sets of learning materials linked to the N/SVQ Levels 2 & 3. These learning materials are being used by the GTC training providers and are available in both CD and hardcopy format.

Each chapter clearly follows the knowledge requirements as specified in the units of the qualification and the information is in line with the best practice and principles for sustainable playing surfaces. No longer do you have to wonder what your colleagues are being taught when they go off to college, you too can now access this information.

Course Managers who have attended a GTC training course to become work-based coaches would benefit from obtaining the materials, as these compliment the skills training any trainee will be required to carry out on the golf course. Having read the learning materials and gained the experience on the job then, in association with your employer, a formal qualification is well within your reach.

Several of the GTC training providers will facilitate this by visiting your workplace to discuss the programme and funding and no longer is it a requirement to leave your job to attend college. Some employers still have yet to grasp the concept of work-based training and often it is the Course Manager who has attended a

GTC assessor-training day, who promotes formal staff training and they are the key person in the vocational training system.

The majority of the GTC training providers still offer vocational qualifications by ensuring the trainee attends the college for a number of days and this is the alternative to all of the learning and training being carried out on the job. What the GTC has ensured is that there are now options to suit both the employer and the learner.

My personal view is that employers seeing on the job staff development being lead by the Course Manager cannot help but be impressed by the system, which is supported by the chosen training provider as the registered Awarding Body Centre. Having established that the Course Manager is the key player in the on the job staff development we must ensure he/she can also access

training to ensure they understand the demands both from their employer and their staff.

The GTC will continue to provide the training to ensure they become competent trainers and assessors but their managerial skills and technical knowledge can be accessed through several sources.

The most traditional route for education has been the land-based further education colleges, who offer courses leading to qualifications such as the Higher National Certificate/ Diploma or Foundation Degree. We now have University accredited B.Sc and M.Sc courses available following GTC and other industry bodies' support. There are also some excellent independent trainers who offer specific courses and organisations, such as

BIGGA. These engage those people who are well briefed to ensure the course are both informative and enjoyable.

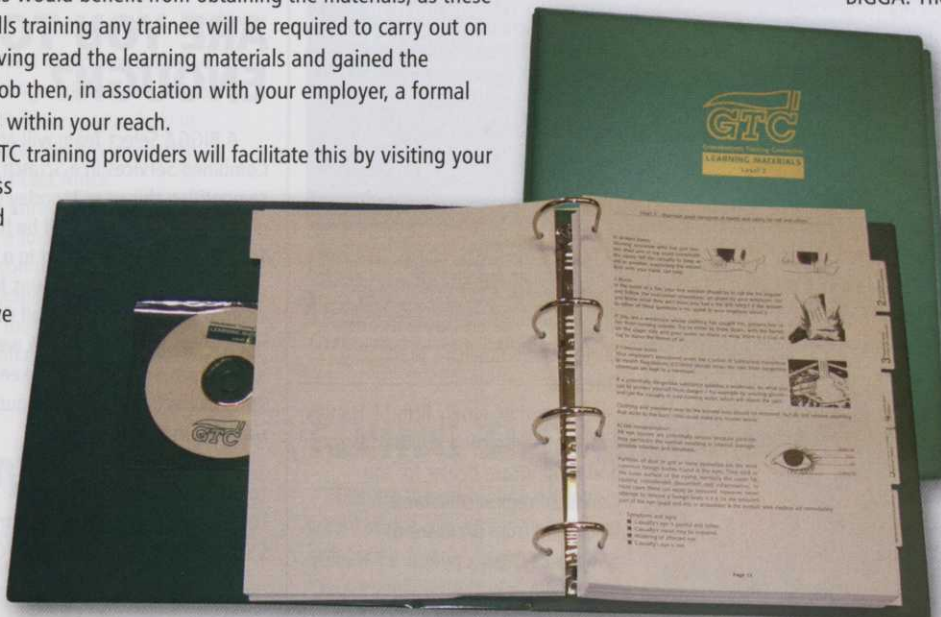
I also still hear that there is a reluctance to train staff through restrictive budgets and this may be true in some cases, but often these are subsidised courses through the Association's education and development fund or with the college courses they receive substantial government subsidies.

What I have learned since leaving BIGGA in 1993 is that it is not always the employer who is preventing staff development, it is often the

Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper who has not presented the case to the owner or Committee why they should support his/her recommendations.

There has never been more access to knowledge and qualifications, therefore if you have been thinking about how do I make the first step to your personal development please pick up the phone or email the GTC to discuss all the options.

David can be contacted on 01347 838640 or email golf@the-gtc.co.uk.



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