

Courses designed for everyone

EDUCATION

The day when your editor can sit through a day of lectures, aimed at members of that much maligned and supposedly misunderstood group 'The Golf Club Committee' – and come out smiling – has finally dawned. At such a seminar, given recently by the National Golf Clubs' Advisory Association, it gave me much pleasure not only to listen to three speakers, but to listen to those who listened. Each an expert in his own sphere: Keith Wright spoke on "The EGU/Club Partnership", our own David Golding on "The Need for Greenkeeper Training" and John Crowther on "The Responsibilities of a Golf Club Member when elected to a Committee".

Each in his own way proved highly entertaining and, of greater importance, each had a message to put across. That they succeeded in winning 100% approval from the audience would be almost too good to be true, but the overriding

message I received, in both eavesdropping and in discussion with green chairmen and secretaries, was of how those greenkeepers who had attended BIGGA management courses returned as changed men. Words hitherto taboo in committee-speak, like employee training; job progress; course excellence and college education, were no longer whispered. I even heard, and dare repeat it, 'greenkeeping management autonomy'!

I can read your mind, and anticipate your quizzical 'what's all this got to do with me?' The answer is simple. BIGGA's management training courses, a feast of which are scheduled for October and November at Aldwark Manor (see insert card for application), are planned specifically to take the heat off those who, perhaps like you, think education is not for them. BIGGA management courses are entertaining. Sure they're educational, but not at the expense of being boring

and never at the expense of technobabble, of talking over your head.

Still not quite convinced? Talk to anyone who has already attended, ask about the courses and what they gained from them, ask about the spirit of informal good fellowship that pervades throughout the whole period – the exchange of ideas and the sheer good fun of it all. If that doesn't convince, look hard at the sits. vac. columns and see how the better educated command higher pay!

The BIGGA management courses, I repeat, are meant just for you. Tell your Club secretary I said so and show him this column.

● **Book your place at one of the BIGGA management courses – see the card facing Page 2 for details.**



Elmwood 'top college in Britain'

Jack Humphries, Chairman of the Midlands Golf Union and President of The E.G.U. Executive Committee, which, amongst other things, is concerned with the training of greenkeepers, paid a visit to Elmwood College, saying: 'There is no doubt that Elmwood is the pinnacle of them all – it is the top college in Britain for training greenkeepers'.

A personal opinion, naturally enough, but doesn't that sound like fighting talk? I predict it will be viewed as red-rag-to-the-bull by other approved colleges, hell-bent, proud, and fiercely competitive in their education of future generations of greenkeepers.

Good jobs for first full-time students

The value of a full-time education course for potential greenkeepers has been amply demonstrated by news of four young men who attended the first such course ever held in Britain, all of whom have been appointed to good positions.

It was four years ago that a three year B Tech National Diploma in Turf Science and Sports Ground Management started at The Lancashire College of Agriculture and Horticulture, near Preston, under the direction of John Hacker.

Seven young men from around the country started the course, part of their first year being spent in college and 20 weeks – one term – at a variety of placements where they gained practical experience. The All-England Lawn Tennis Club at Wimbledon, Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club, Cardiff Arms Park, Guernsey Golf Club and Grimsby Leisure Centre were among the organisations that took the budding greenkeepers.

The second year was spent solely at the college, whilst in the third most students went to golf courses for 32 weeks – in Florida.

Now comes news that Chris Harvey, one of the students on that path-finding course run by John Hacker (now running his own consultancy), has been appointed course manager at Isle of Purbeck GC in Dorset, where he is in charge of the 27 hole complex. Chris, who had previously worked as groundsman for Portsmouth FC, incidentally married an American girl whilst in the US last year.

Another, John Huntington from York, has recently been first assistant at Farnham GC and on June 11th took over as deputy head greenkeeper of the Kings Course at Gleneagles.

Graham Wallace, a third group member, is deputy head greenkeeper on the Monarch Course at Gleneagles.

whilst Geoff Allison, from Peterlee, is an assistant on the new Wisley Course due to open in August.

It is good to learn that their hard work is paying off and equally gratifying that similar courses have been running successfully at The Lancashire College each year thereafter.

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■ Five Scottish colleges have formed a consortium to write units for a SCOTVEC Higher National Certificate course in Greenkeeping with Management.

This will be the first advanced greenkeeping course developed in the country and indicates the importance of carving a real career in such a vibrant industry through further education.

The five involved are Ayr and Dundee College of Technology, Elmwood in Fife, Langside in Glasgow and Oatridge near Edinburgh, with the consortium chaired by BIGGA's own Cecil George.

Pictured: Representatives from each college, together with Cecil George, at a recent development day.