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Education

**Seminar  
success**



■ The recent Elmwood College Greenkeeping Conference, which followed on from two days of specialist seminars, proved so popular that further one day seminars are planned for the future. The conference was chaired by Elliott Small, pictured, the BIGGA Scottish Regional Administrator, who skillfully guided the speakers and audience through an enjoyable day. It was announced during the week-end that Elmwood will be offering a new one year full-time National Certificate in Greenkeeping.

■ Myerscough (Lancashire College of Agriculture) is holding a two day event on May 14th/15th which will specialise exclusively in golf course construction and maintenance. The underlying theme will be to invite manufacturers of construction and maintenance equipment to use the College golf course to demonstrate, not only to clients, but to the many greenkeepers and recreation managers who are expected to attend. As an added feature, the College is also organising seminars relating to current developments in this specialist field. The event is being held at the Myerscough centre of the College, which is situated on the A6, 5 miles from junction 32 on the M6. All those interested in golf course construction- or in sportsturf generally- are welcome to attend. Entry is free, from 10.30am to 4.00pm each day.

■ Highly successful - that was the opinion of 19 greenkeepers who attended Elmwood's supervisory course for practicing or prospective head greenkeepers and course managers. This intensive course covered a variety of topics including Time Management; Budgeting & Accounts; Health & Safety; COSHH; Public Speaking and Computers- including an introduction to the TRIMS Ground Management Software Package. Highlights of the course were the interview sessions where each greenkeeper was 'subjected' to the ordeal of facing a panel of well-known people from the industry for 20-30 minutes. One such session was video recorded to allow further feedback to take place. The course was over subscribed, so another is scheduled for November.



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# Book now for Management Courses

Following the success of previous in-house Management Courses over the past two years, five more one week courses are scheduled for the coming autumn, all such courses specifically programmed to attract greenkeepers who may not have received further education or greenkeeper training.

The magnificent Aldwark Manor will accommodate over one hundred greenkeepers during the five courses and for those who have not yet visited HQ, will provide the ideal opportunity to luxuriate at a four star hotel with five days of education.

Those members who have attended either first or second year courses will again have an opportunity to attend, with week five specially created for them. It is anticipated that all five courses will be in heavy demand and members are requested to note specific week numbers and course content before completing the pre-paid booking card to be found facing Page 4 of this issue.

The costs for 1991 are again subsidised by generous support from Kubota (UK) Ltd and The Greenkeepers Training Committee.

## YEAR 1

Week 1 : 28 October – 1 November inc.

Week 2 : 4 November – 8 November inc.

Course content to include: Time Management; Introduction to Computers; Communication Skills; Problems associated with the Management of Tees, Greens; Fairways, Bunkers & Surrounds, Health & Safety, Turf Diseases; Conservation; and Grasses for the Golf Course.

## YEAR 2

Priority will be given to those having attended the YEAR 1 Course in 1989 or 1990.

Week 3 : 11 November – 15 November inc.

Week 4 : 18 November – 22 November inc.

Course content to include: Presentations to a Committee (verbal and written); Preparing a CV; Report Writing; Interviewing; Public Speaking; FEPA/COSHH; Spraying; Health & Safety; Turf Nutrition.

## YEAR 3

Priority will be given to those who have attended the YEAR 1 and YEAR 2 Courses.

Week 5: 25 November – 29 November inc.

Course content to include: Discipline Amongst Staff; Preparing for Job Interviews; Irrigation; Tee & Green Construction; Preparing & Implementing a Course Maintenance Plan.

Lecturers for all courses will be drawn from GTC Approved Greenkeeper Colleges, The STRI and Private Training Organisations. All courses begin noon Monday and close noon Friday. Costs are inclusive of all meals and accommodation.

COST PER WEEK: £225 + VAT = £264.38. Please make cheques payable to BIGGA.

**Early booking is strongly recommended – select chosen week and complete pre-paid card facing Page 4.**

DAVID WHITE reports on the third BIGGA National Education Conference, York 1991

## Greenkeeping issues in a walled city

The Romans came to York in AD 71, an occupation that lasted for 340 years. The greenkeepers came, specifically occupying York's Langwith College, nearly 2000 later when about 170 people from around the globe gathered for the most ambitious conference yet staged by BIGGA, made possible through the generous support of Lindum Turf & Associates.

No less than 17 papers were presented, a remarkable feat demanding total adherence to schedule and made possible only by the firm rein taken by Chairman, Gordon Child. Educational opportunities were abundant, and following George Malcolm's introduction, America's Dr Roy Goss began with The Influence of Soils and Management Practices on Anaerobic Rootzones. That Roy is an entertaining fellow is well known, though as one in favour of pure sand for green construction, indeed vehemently stating that he cannot recommend other than pure sand, Roy entered what may be thought of in the UK as a 'minefield' of conflicting views. It is perhaps worth noting that such controversy does much to generate a healthy exchange of ideas, which this conference certainly achieved, both on and off the platform.

This report must restrict itself, by the nature of space afforded, to an overview of the proceedings. Thus it may not seem too remiss to skip lightly over that which was no light matter at all – namely the splendid papers presented by College Lecturer, Dr Richard Gibbs; Agronomist, David Stansfield; and Golf Course Architect, Martin Hawtree; for their recorded presentations may well form the basis for future individual articles within our pages. Rounding off day one, let me just mention Larry Gilhuly, Director Western Region, USGA Green Section, and his hugely entertaining The Good, The Bad and The Ugly of Golf Course Management. Larry, in his USGA role, carries out a function not dissimilar to that of STRI agronomists and his presentation, spiced with the wildest slide show imaginable, took delegates on a tour of those golf course horrors in the USA that all too often looked just like home and perhaps a shade too close for comfort.

Greenkeepers are well known for their temperance and it was therefore no surprise to learn that delegates had all retired early to bed, the better to be bright-eyed for eight lectures on Saturday! Dr Bill Adams began with a timely discussion on the Thatch problem, followed by Joe Paulin, whose Greenkeeping from Indiana to Ireland to Gleneagles demonstrated how good management techniques can cross not only regions of the U.S.A., but whole continents. It was all bonny stuff and made us glad this Yank had joined our ranks. George Shiels, Vice Principal of Merrist Wood College, suggested his talk might best be regarded as a commercial break, continuing in his jocular way to expound on how Merrist Wood was breaking new ground

**Sweeping new changes in greenkeeper training and financing were welcomed at BIGGA's National Education Conference when the R. & A. announced disbandment of the G.T.C. in favour of a new Joint Golf Course Committee. Our Association is to have a much greater say in all future programming**

with a PGA endorsed educational course – aimed at low handicap golfers and pro's – regarded in some greenkeeping circles as controversial. He made it sound innocent enough, though I personally found it strange that he parried so many questions from other colleges, with a 'four aces to the chest, musn't tell you too much, you're the opposition', style of reply. One would hope that an educational break-through, if that is what the Merrist Wood course represents, might be shared; rather than guarded in this protectionist fashion.

Geoff Hodson, as many of you know, is the mastermind behind Lindum Turf. It therefore came as no surprise that he had masterminded the nifty little four man presentation, titled: The Golf Course-from Conception to Completion. A whistle-stop tour in just 70 minutes, it was quite stunning. The amiable Steve Cadenelli, GCSAA President for 1991, talked of the role the greenkeeper / superintendent plays and in listening one was struck not so much by high contrasts but by the many similarities revealed. If State-side greenkeeper status appears different it might be because we in Britain have the unique habit of not selling ourselves too well. Shades of Bobby Gee, one might say.

Freddie Ten Hage is a name familiar with many, and as Holland's greenkeeping ambassador and most enthusiastic BIGGA member he entertained us in fine style, describing his native golfing country in a fashion that was both humorous and informative. As a historian I'm often puzzled that so few Dutchmen have emerged onto the world golf scene, for golf, or kolf (the short game) and kolf (the long game) as titled in Holland, originated in the low countries.

Everyone anticipated something special when Nick Park, Chairman of the R.&A./ Unions Sub Committee, chaired a panel on The Way Forward Document & Subsequent Developments. We were not disappointed. First revelation was that a new JOINT GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE – a five man panel from the home unions and the R. & A. – had been established to co-ordinate the raising of funds for both technical matters and training and recruitment. In both areas BIGGA was visualised as playing a crucial role, with the Technical Sector envisaged as fulfilling a similar role to that of the USGA Green Section, both the STRI and BIGGA being solidly represented.

Turning to training, the proposal was that the Golf Unions, the R. & A., BIGGA and those representing the educational bodies should form a panel of experts and, once needs had been established and budgets prepared, refer back to the Joint Golf Course Committee. In turn, the JGCS would ensure suitably realistic levies were collected through the unions, with still further revenue added by R. & A. donations.

(Continued overleaf)



(from previous page)

Summarising, Nick Park impressed upon us three key factors which would bring about change for the better: First, the new structure would ensure total continuity and thus override or outweigh any individual whims or personalities. Second, that greenkeepers (BIGGA) will play a much bigger part in deciding how (much larger) sums of money might be spent. Finally, that this was a genuine partnership between Unions, Clubs and the Association.

Asked if professional golfers might have a part to play, Secretary of the EGU, Keith Wright, suggested that there was no place for them in this endeavour, "indeed", he continued, "the sooner we convince Clubs that greenkeeping is an art and a profession the better it will be for all concerned". A murmur of approval rumbled through the halls.

One might imagine this session a hard act to follow, but with an up-to-the-minute topic like Greenkeeping in the year 2010 – Who are we training and for what? Dr Hugh Nunn took the day to a splendid close, all present being given plenty upon which to cogitate.

Saturday night was given to merriment, with a fine banquet set before us in the historic Merchant Adventurers Hall, followed by the riotously funny act of Barry Williams, which proved to be an inspired choice in sealing the high mood of the evening.

With a somewhat subdued audience, following Saturday's excesses, Larry Gilhuly judged the mood perfectly with It's a matter of Quality, for although specifically informative it had just the right seasoning of humour to bring sparkle back into weary souls. Two young masters of their craft followed, Ken Siems first; demonstrating both visually and vocally that bent grasses (and other innovative features) at East Sussex National were no myth, with Peter Jones following in fine style to tell us (again with splendid pictures) how at Collingtree Park he had mastered the pure sand greens and Penncross conundrum. Both left us on a 'high', which remained to the end, Dr Roy Goss winding-up by discussing alternatives to our old 'friend' *Poa annua*.

Leaving York, we are heartened by the good news from Nick Park, inspired by the good vibes that such conferences instil within us and gladdened that old friendships have been renewed and new ones created. We shall be back for more!

# A learning experience

David Norton, the TORO Greenkeeper of the Year, recently spent two months in America as part of his winners award. These are his observations...

Airports can be chaotic enough in themselves and I had seen quite enough organised chaos on both sides of the Atlantic, with my journey taking over 20 hours from Beverly to the University of Massachusetts. Just when I felt the worst was over along came a sting in the tail. That sting was the 15 minute ride on Boston's underground, though without taking you on a similar ride I cannot begin to explain its nastiness. Suffice to say that in the whole eight weeks away it was the lowspot of my tour, and I count myself lucky to have arrived with luggage intact. When I finally reached the campus it was dark; below freezing; snowing; and the dormitory was locked!

I was soon inducted into American ways and began the seven-week, eleven subject, course in fine spirits. These included turfgrass management; golf course architecture; turfgrass diseases; entomology; irrigation; physiology; personnel management; calculations; soils and fertilisers; trees and shrubs; and the equipment shop, with students being tested by exam or practical project, sometimes both.

There was never a dull moment, for the excellent course material was both informative and practically based and though classroom days were long – 8am to 5.30 pm – the time flew past. Some of the material was familiar from my days at Askham Bryan, with the presentation made doubly fascinating by its 'Americanisation'. For example, our meadow grass is known as Kentucky Blue Grass (which sounds much nicer) and came to light when latin names were used in the classroom. My fascination grew when talk turned to American warm season grasses – so different from those few varieties we have here in Britain – and the management practices necessary for their survival.

The essential ingredient in any learning experience is, in my opinion, the dialogue that comes after school. My unfounded though long-held views on America and the Americans were soon changed through such conversations and I now feel that no big gap exists in the capability of 'them' as opposed to 'us'. What is clear, however, is that education is a high priority, high profile subject, and this we must emulate at every opportunity if we are to gain the same professional recognition enjoyed by our American cousins.

Did I tell you about the war? It broke out whilst I was there, giving me an exposure to American news coverage that was truly mind-blasting. Twenty-four hour TV coverage on four channels, newspapers crammed to capacity and in Amhurst itself the sight of demos and peace protesters marching on the streets. This climaxed on George Washington's Birthday when a peace protester incinerated himself on the village green. Thankfully a cease-fire was called before I flew home.

This was no "all work and no play" trip and I lived it up in Las Vegas at the GCSAA show. I had been psyched by fellow US students into believing the show would be enormous and indeed it was quite big, though not as big as they would have it. It was good though, with many excellent short, sharp and snappy 20 minutes lectures and a chance to see the Hydrojet, both on show and later in action in California. Suddenly familiar faces appear at the BIGGA stand, Neil Thomas, Debbie Savage and Ivor



The Tamarisk Course, southern California

Scoones, and a chance to meet ICI Premier Greenkeeper Award winner, Anthony Davies, who had also won a trip to the show. Likewise familiarity at the TORO exhibit where Graham and Dave presided and where I was invited to participate in still more merriment – this time at TORO's reception party.

On campus I had met folks from Sun City; Pebble Beach; Butler National; Pinehurst and Pole Creek, to name but a few of the famous courses represented, whilst at the show I was privileged to meet and talk with many other important and influential people in the golf industry. Truly a learning experience.

Las Vegas itself will long live in my memory, with its gambling tables and over-the-top extravaganza style. Could you really believe it, I even saw white snow tigers guarding the entrance to the Mirage Hotel!

Returning to school, a final grand dinner (coinciding with celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the turf school) was shared with lecturers and students, before we all received our certificates at a passing-out parade. I had learned so much, mixed with so many fine people and was reluctant to move on, but California – in the shape of TORO's Irrigation Plant at Riverside – beckoned.

So to the final week, with a conducted tour of the plant proving most interesting and hugely informative. A real 'home cookin' meal of delicious taste and proportion with Bill and Carol Theole was followed by a trip with Bill to the desert. Palm Springs is where TORO have a desert outlet and from this base we visited several eye-popping courses and talked with green maintenance staff. The courses at PGA West, La Quinta and Tamarisk especially impressed me and it was at Tamarisk that I saw my first ever *Poa trivialis* greens, which in both Britain and America we were taught were 'no go'. Seeing was definitely believing! Funny thing, they were suffering the effects of a 5 year drought, though on the day I visited it rained more than it had in two whole years – typical!

One day to go, with the morning spent at Riverside in mind-blowing discussion with Jon Williams on irrigation systems past, present and future. I do hope he achieves all that he is aiming for. Indeed, on reflection, I'm sure he will. Now the end is looming, though I could happily stay on for several more weeks in California, and I am sorry to leave. The airport newsstand offers an English newspaper for £5.50 and I begin to feel drawn homeward bound. Calculations now reveal that I've covered 20,000 miles, being transported through Boston's subway nightmare to the tables of Vegas and the beaches of California. A great and rewarding experience which I shall never forget. There are too many people to thank individually, but to everyone concerned – the organisers, TORO as sponsors and all Americans who made me feel so welcome – thank you all. May all future winners enjoy equal pleasure and delight and, perhaps most important of all, gain true and lasting benefit from the learning which such a trip affords.