

An exciting new era for the Association

Whilst it is indisputably true that money makes the world go around, it is equally true in the vocation of greenkeeping that education is the key to professionalism – and the two are inextricably linked!

No – please don't flick to the next page, for I am not about to launch into a 'party political' on Clubs that fail to recognise and follow recommended BIGGA pay scales, or of well documented examples where educated greenkeepers have risen to lofty heights and larger salaries. Like the forthcoming general election and the continuous haranguing that is bound to come, you'll be getting quite enough of that in the future.

Yes, it's true, we certainly intend to continue 'banging the drum' about increased knowledge bringing increased rewards, and of the role your Association will play in this revolution. It's true also that in the five years since its formation, BIGGA has purposefully set its cap toward the path of improving and enhancing the recognition of the greenkeeper as a professional and in advancing management and maintenance techniques to ever higher standards.

If there are some who still doubt, they need look no further than the establishment of numerous new college-based courses and the introduction of "in-house" training at Aldwark Manor. Look and marvel, for though all this educational activity costs money – lots and lots of it – your Board of Management has not sat around waiting for others to trail-blaze, rather they have hit upon a clever and provocative scheme whereby those within the game of golf and working in associated fine turf industries will be able to both contribute and offer suggestions on further advancements to the education and development of golf's best raw material, that unsung hero, the greenkeeper.

Titled the Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund, this exciting new promotional venture was launched at BTME by Viscount Whitelaw and acclaimed by everyone as a real breakthrough in fund raising and management.

In recognising that educational needs are legion, financial contributions are sought from both individuals and companies or groups, such to be channelled into one centrally founded Fund, to which some £56,000 is already committed for 1992 and which is confidently expected to grow substantially with an increased input from the Joint Golf Course Committee.

With the JGCC seeking to persuade every golfer in the land to contribute the price of a golf ball into their central fund (which will quite rightly include substantial provision for greenkeeper training) so also are BIGGA seeking contributions – but in a different manner.

Formed as either 'Golden Key Circle' or 'Silver Key Circle' memberships, companies or groups making donations to the Fund in excess of £3000 annually (Golden Key) will be recognised and profiled within the pages of Greenkeeper International and will become Company members of BIGGA. They will also have priority stand space at the BIGGA Open Championship marquee and be instantly identified by a specially designed plaque and 'Golden Key Circle' tie. Individuals who donate over £150 annually will share many similar benefits, including Associate membership, and earn a 15% discount on all BIGGA educational programmes. For Silver Key Circle donors representing groups or companies and contributing sums of from £1000-£3000, there will also be Company membership; together with the wearing of a 'Silver Key Circle' tie and the display of a distinctive plaque. As individuals, (donating from £75-£150) Silver Key Circle donors become Associate members and earn a 7.5% educational programme discount.

This then is the 'bones' of membership to the Greenkeeper



Education and Development Fund, a no-nonsense idea that is bound to catch on, presenting as it does an opportunity to put in to get out. We are in no doubt that improved professionalism benefits *everyone*.

Already there are many good friends in the trade who have indicated their support for the Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund in 1992 – in most cases tried and true supporters of our past endeavours – and I am delighted to single them out and acknowledge their contribution here: Iseki UK Ltd (for support of the Iseki Regional Golf Tournament), ICI Professional Products (for support of the Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award), Toro Irrigation, Lely UK Ltd, and the PGA European Tour (for support of the Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award), Rufford Top Dress Supplies Ltd (for continued support of the Association), Kubota UK Ltd (for support of the BIGGA Management Course Programme); and Lindum Seeded Turf (for support of the National Education Conference).

Also at the launch ceremony at BTME were three worthy recipients of somewhat special awards and these men must not escape without plaudit. In 1987, when the former greenkeeping associations amalgamated to form BIGGA, the British Golf Greenkeepers Association placed its funds in trust for the very purpose of promoting greenkeeper training. Now those trustees, Alan Gamble, Alan Kite and Ivor Scoones, have begun to wind-up the trust and will transfer monies held to the new Education and Development Fund. It was for their selfless service as trustees that Viscount Whitelaw made the awards, giving credit where credit was most certainly due!

Where will the money go? Obviously there are many items on the educational agenda that cry out for funding, some perhaps more important than others but all deserving of wider exposure. The Association will look increasingly toward the funding of scholarship awards, the development of management courses; of training aids and text books and the provision of an Association library. The National Education Conference is vitally important, as are regional and sectional seminars and the adding of training resources at BIGGA headquarters and the promotion of the Master Greenkeeper Certification programme. We seek to provide technical training films and to promote greenkeeping as a career on videotape, to get deeply involved in research projects and look closer still at the wonders of computer programmes specifically designed for the greenkeeping industry.

It all adds up to an exciting new era for the Association and those who support our aims and ideals. To coin a phrase, it's a chance for the industry; and for those who benefit from the game in some phase or other either as players or officials, to put their money where their mouth is! So let's hear it for fund-raising BIGGA style. There has never been a more deserving case.

DAVID WHITE