

The Last Word

Send your letters to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, 13 Firlie Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL

becoming assessment centres for NVQ's or SVQ's. The greatest benefit to greenkeeping is that these centres will provide the training for candidates and also carry out the assessments.

In the future there will be colleges established as Regional Training and Assessment Centres: offering courses and/or assessments for craft, supervisory and management levels, together with many more 'local' centres approved for just craft level training and/or assessments.

All greenkeeper training, we believe, should involve the use of The GTC Training Manual, and that it should be used not only as an individual's evidence collector but also as a record of achievement towards an NVQ or SVQ.

By now you will have gathered that there are major changes taking place which we intend to monitor very closely. The GTC is keen to develop a partnership between those who provide training and those in the greenkeeping profession. This is already evident, with leading colleges using trained and skillful course managers (and, in some cases, their deputies) as part-time trainers and/or assessors. This is a major initiative which has our full support.

Assessor qualifications will need to be achieved by GTC approved industry representatives, and help and guidance will be given, especially as the committee has no wish to burden a mere handful of industry assessors when their priority obviously is in the workplace. On that point, if any BIGGA member needs further information on how to become an assessor, I hope that he or she will call me.

Where does BIGGA fit in, what role will it now play?

DG: The GTC will be looking to BIGGA for continuance of their excellent role as training providers. In addition, of course, we anticipate working together in close co-operation and consultation on such things as conferences, seminars and management courses. The GTC will continue also to work with other training providers, such as the STRI, and with the greenkeeping associations in Northern Ireland and Eire.

In summary, it is the role of the GTC to set the standards of greenkeeping qualifications, to monitor those standards, and to work closely with those who provide the training, thus ensuring that first class training is always available. I believe the relationship we enjoy with the R&A and the Home Unions, with BIGGA and other greenkeeping associations and with those interested bodies such as the PGA European Tour, will ensure that standards of greenkeeping will improve and that the quality of our courses will continue to be maintained by a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

● The GTC Unit is situated at the Aldwark Manor Golf Hotel, York. Tel: 0347 838640 Fax: 0347 838775.

'Them' and 'Us' concern

Having been a greenkeeper for some 25 years, working my way up through the ranks to course manager, I feel I must respond to the situation occurring in Holland at this time.

I am a BIGGA member and have been since the onset of the Association. Recently I received an invitation to attend the first BIGGA meeting in Holland but I chose to decline, fearing a situation arising of 'them' (the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association), and 'us' (BIGGA).

I recall being a member of BGGGA, at the time holding office as chairman for the Sussex section, when other members of the Association and myself were involved in the organisation of EIGGA and experiencing the 'them' and 'us' situation against SIGGA and finally, after many meetings, the formation of BIGGA.

If BIGGA is to grow in Holland, surely the correct procedure must be to involve NGA members at initial meetings, explaining the advantages of BIGGA membership to them, not an 'ego trip' for an elite few who are BIGGA members already.

**Lionel Harris, Course Manager,
Grevelinghout Golf Club, Holland**

Frederick ten Hage, BIGGA representative for the Netherlands, responds:

I understand Mr Harris's concern about developments taking place within BIGGA at the moment, especially as the Association is trying to expand the international side of greenkeeping matters. I would assume that working on this particular subject will have everyone's approval. This must be done in good harmony and understanding, i.e. beneficial to those most concerned.

Mr Harris's opinion of a 'them' and 'us' situation is absolutely unfounded and not of this time. It would have been more appropriate had he accepted our most serious invitation to join the meeting. Unfortunately he felt the need to decline, though I am sure that had he attended he would have concluded differently.

For this same reason he would not, I think, have found the need to close by speaking of an 'ego trip' for an elite few. This suggests some profound prejudicial points of view. An attitude of this kind will not contribute to the building of a sound platform, one from which we might start and maintain good relations between both associations. This is one of BIGGA's main targets for the future.

It is a vital and most necessary action to upgrade the profession of greenkeeping throughout the world. Furthermore, and to finish this reaction, may I suggest a referral to the BIGGA Holland column in 'Around The Green' of this issue.

Executive director, Neil Thomas concludes, "The recent initiative of Frederick in calling a meeting of BIGGA members in Holland is to be welcomed. The meeting came about following discussions held during the European Forum at the BTME last January. I can assure Lionel that his points are well taken and BIGGA members in Holland will wish to work very closely with members of the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association. It is our wish to see our fellow Associations in Europe flourishing and growing and BIGGA

remains ready to offer any practical assistance in their development which may be requested and which it is able to give. It is unfortunate that Lionel did not feel able to attend this initial meeting as I feel sure he would have come away reassured over his points of concern. Frederick will be reporting on developments in Holland during the European Forum at the 1994 BTME and I would hope that as many members of the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association as possible will attend in order to cement the relationship of our Associations. I would also point out that we enjoy an excellent relationship with the Netherlands Golf Federation which has been instrumental in the setting up of the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association".

Beware 'man in a pub'

On a cold March morning one of the fleet of SISIS demonstration wagons, fully laden with new and demonstration machinery, was stolen from a secure parking location. Police were immediately alerted and facts were circulated via computer links throughout the country. Friends and relations were advised, dealers were acquainted, even competitors were given a smile or two when they were put in the picture. The insurers were given the news, to add to other disasters they have had to bear.

From April through to August, information was as scant as orders in the aforementioned competitors' books. The condition of golf courses from Amsterdam to 'Ammersmiff', from Manchester to Malaga was constantly reviewed, as improved putting surfaces might well have seen Interpol on full alert.

When a confirmed sighting was eventually made, however, it was much closer to home, South Lancashire in fact. The eagle eyes of a young rep. spotted a galaxy of the famous yellow machines at a new golf club, where such units had not been seen previously.

A call to head-office was swiftly passed to the SISIS regional manager. Nudge, nudge, wink, wink, speed limit observed (but only just) and every single unit was found, some still bearing the SISIS DEMO UNIT logos, not a solitary serial number obliterated. This is probably why the police, for once, believed the one about the man in the pub.

The moral, it seems, is to always say 'no' if someone in a pub offers you some SISIS machines. We've so many reps, friends, relations, in-laws, dealers, associates and contacts - why even our competitors are friendly! With so many ears to the ground thieves hardly stand a chance of avoiding discovery.

By the way, if anyone offers you a Leyland DAF painted in the famous yellow livery (though heaven only knows what colour it might be now), you could make a few people very happy by phoning SISIS, perhaps saving a little on your next insurance premium at the same time.

Lynn Hilton, SISIS Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd., Macclesfield, Cheshire

PS. Incidentally, after nearly six months using the range, the club in question found it couldn't bear to part with the Multislit, Contraseeder and Powasped - so it bought them!