

Boost for training as turf industry achieves NVQ accreditation

The latest review of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) has seen a major boost for greenkeeper training with the accreditation of NVQs in Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Maintenance. These qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 replace the existing NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Amenity Horticulture (Greenkeeping) which together with the Greenkeeper Training Committee Training Manual provided craft and supervisory qualifications for the industry. The Training Manual will remain as the record of achievement for NVQ candidates working on golf courses.

"This is what I've been working towards since I joined the Industry Lead Body for Amenity Horticulture three years ago," said Greenkeepers Training Committee Education Director, David Golding.

"The GTC has always been totally behind the concept of vocational qualifications, which are now being promoted under the slogan 'Based on Skill - Awarded on Merit', but we self-

ishly wanted to make them more relevant to our industry.

"The problem previously was that the the Amenity Horticulture qualifications were too broadly based for our industry and did not cover enough greenkeeping and turf management skills."

'We shall now be able to tailor NVQs to our exact requirements'

To achieve this latest breakthrough a campaign of lobbying by the turf industry, orchestrated by David, involving the Home Unions, R&A, BIGGA, the IOG and colleges, was undertaken behind the scenes to convince the Industry Lead Body, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, City and Guilds and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (formerly SCOTVEC) that the Fine Turf Industry was ready to take on the responsibility of managing its own qualifications. The current review of standards gave the opportunity

to bring about the changes.

"We shall now be able to tailor NVQs to our exact requirements to ensure that the requirements of the industry are met. Ownership of the awards means that we, the industry, can take the lead with the awarding bodies to ensure that our 300 Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper assessors and verifiers will monitor and uphold National Standards.

"We shall be in a position to call upon education providers, including colleges, to give the type of training that fits into the overall package required by the employers," explained David.

Those people who are currently going through the NVQ Amenity Horticulture Levels and are following the Training Manual will not be disadvantaged as their qualifications will continue to be relevant.

"This is a marvellous opportunity for all parts of the Industry to have an award that is closely matched to its requirements," said Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education Officer.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Tildenet is publishing a new series of educational books entitled "The Groundsman's Companion."

The first companion, out now, concentrates on the maintenance of cricket tables and outfield. Written by the STRI and edited by Len Smith Ground Supervisor at Glamorgan County Cricket Club, the book has been produced in four easy to read sections, Spring, Playing season, End of Season and Winter.

The first of their kind these publications bring together all the traditional methods of Groundsmanship including hints and tips from some of the best known groundsman in the country.

At the price of £5 this invaluable aid is available from Tildenet Ltd, call: 0117 966 9684 or any local Tildenet distributor.

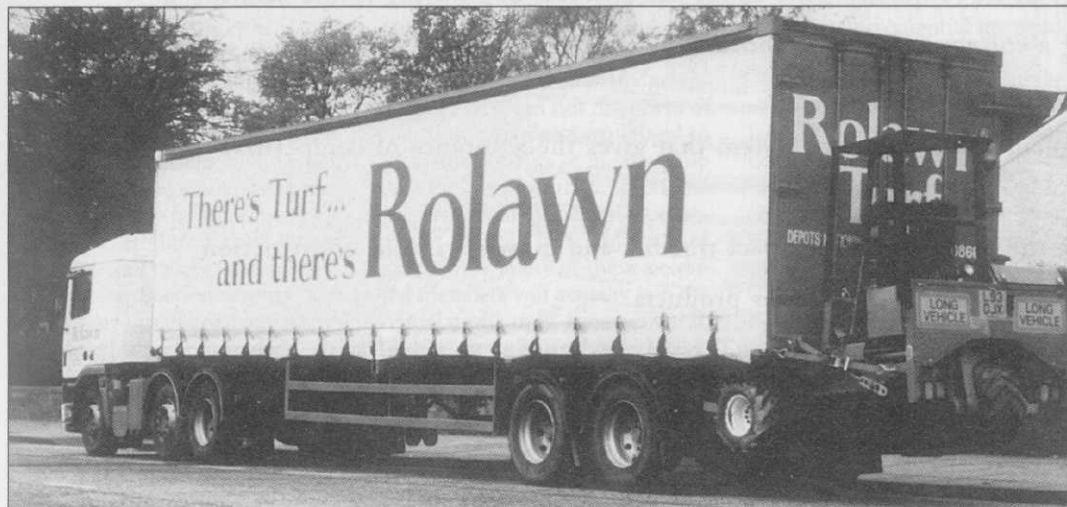
■ Sisis has appointed three more Sisis Direct service engineers. They are Mark Rodman, West Country and South Wales, Lyndon Weeks, Surrey and South West London and Chris Goodchild, London and South East Home Counties.

■ Bourne Amenity has appointed Gordon Smith, formerly Course Manager at Liphook GC, Head Greenkeeper at Swinley Forest and most recently Course Manager at Selsdon Park Hotel, as Area Sales Manager to cover Surrey and Hampshire.

■ Grass Roots Annual Inter Club five-a-side competition will be held at Stockley Park Sports Ground on June 11, '97. For further information on the event which last year attracted over 300 greenkeepers, contact Grass Roots on 0118 9736600.

■ The Ransomes Dealer Technical Training Award for 1997 has been won by Rickerby Ltd, Ransomes' appointed grass and turf machinery dealer based in Carlisle.

Open to all of Ransomes' UK dealers/ the award was secured by Rickerby with an average score of 84.73% achieved by the company's 11 engineers who attended service courses held in recent months at Ransomes' international training centre at Ipswich.



Turf grower rolls out new delivery service

Rolawn's fleet of delivery vehicles has developed to the stage whereby the company is now able to offer its customers free mechanical off loading from any of its 16 turf depots located throughout the UK.

Because the company operates a no minimum order policy, establishing the service on a no cost basis nationwide proved to

be a challenge.

Rolawn Depot Managers and Regional Sales Managers have full details of the service which operates (mainly) with Moffett Mouny fork lift trucks being carried on the back of the company's delivery vehicles.

The fork lifts are used to off load the turf and position it ready for use.

"Issues such as Health and Safety, labour costs and speed of production are all driving customer demand for mechanical off-loading. As the largest turf grower in Europe we wanted to offer our customers this comprehensive service free of charge, and now we can," stated Terry Ryan, Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director.

Turfcare firm applauded in small business awards

The Grass Roots Trading Company has picked up a top award at the prestigious Black Horse Small Business Awards run by Lloyds Bank.

The company, whose Managing Director Jamie Bennett is a familiar face among greenkeepers in the home counties, took the Black Horse Small Business Award and Jamie was presented with the trophy and the cheque for £1000 by former Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey.

"We are extremely proud. There was a very strict criteria for entry including customer liaison and accountancy audit and it was a most nerve wracking experience," said Jamie.

Grass Roots was launched two and a half years ago from Jamie and his wife Jacqueline's home



and they now distribute over 9,000 turfcare products to many of the country's top sporting venues including Sunningdale

GC and Wimbledon.

In an article in the Business Magazine which highlighted the awards it was revealed that

Grass Roots turned over £41,000 in its first year and that it rose to over £1.8 million in the second year.

My first six months in the region

It is now some six months since I took up the post as BIGGA Midland Regional Administrator which, in addition to the routine tasks previously performed by my predecessor, entails visiting golf clubs in the Region to meet current members and to recruit new members. To date I have visited over 60 golf clubs, attended a number of Section events and met many greenkeepers, secretaries, owners and managers.

The response generally has been that they are pleased to see someone from the Association and have the opportunity to talk

face to face on membership and what the Association has to offer. I have also talked to many greenkeepers who are not members of the Association and explained to them the benefits of membership and left them with promotional literature and membership application forms. It is difficult to assess how many of these potential members will actually join the Association, only time will tell, but the majority did show a keen interest.

In the coming weeks I intend to continue my visits and I look forward to meeting many more

members and potential members. Now a commercial.

Following the poor attendance at the Midland Regional Seminar last November at the Sketchley Grange Hotel in Hinckley, the Regional Board has decided on a change of location. This year's Regional Seminar will be held at the Northampton Rugby Football Club (the Saints) on Wednesday, November 19, 1997.

The principal speakers will be Jack McMillan, George Brown, Ryder Cup player Peter Baker, (to be confirmed) and Martin Jones with supporting talks from Noel

Green, runner-up in the '96 Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year competition, and Mike Wadley, Secretary of the Northamptonshire County Golf Club, Danny Godfrey, Broughton Loam Ltd and David Powell, Saint's Head Groundsman.

Support your Region by making a special effort to attend the Seminar and also learn something from the experience. Application forms will be sent out later this year and if you do not receive one get in touch with me or your local Section Secretary.

Peter Larter

Association sets new challenges

More than 15 years after its formation, the Amenity Grass Marketing Association (AGMA) is setting itself new challenges.

Throughout its life through the efforts of its member companies, the Association has stood for quality – quality of products and quality of supply. These aims do not change...

"We support the use of purpose bred amenity grasses,

advice that offers the right quality of variety to meet users expectations and the surety of knowing the customer will receive what he originally specified," comments John Akers, Chairman of AGMA. He went on "We are planning to bring these ideals more to the forefront of amenity grass seed consumers with a programme of marketing activities in the coming months."

Further changes in the Association result from a change in the Secretaryship – the Association has been well served during the past five years by Anthony Andrews CBE, who as a result of increased workloads in his international seed consultancy business has passed his duties to David Keegan. The new 'address' for the Association becomes: AGMA, PO Box 30, Tetbury, GL8 8ZQ.

**THE FACTS:
NOT THE HYPE**

Paul Crouch
Head Greenkeeper
Puttenham
Golf Club

“ After using Primer 604 for a second year I am more than pleased with the reduction of dry patch on my greens, it will certainly play a major part in my 1997 programme. ”

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HAYTER CHALLENGE

Reasons to get in more practice

This year there are two huge extra reasons to spend a few more hours pounding balls on the practice range or honing your skills on the putting green in preparation for the annual Hayter Challenge. Those who win through from the regional qualifiers will have the rare opportunity of playing one of the country's finest in-land courses and there are also places on offer to represent the Rest of the World team to play against the Americas in the Hayter International Cup to be played in the USA next year.

Ganton Golf Club, near Scarborough, has hosted many major events including the Ryder Cup, in 1949, and regularly welcomes The Amateur Championship, the last occasion being 1991 when Gary Wolstenholme triumphed.

Once there, the player with a handicap of 12 or better, who represents and resides in each of the home countries and who performs best in this year's Hayter Challenge Final, will be selected for the Rest of the World team in the second Hayter International match, to be held at the Cherokee Town and Country Club, Atlanta, Georgia, in October 1998.

A rare opportunity indeed particularly as the team will have the chance to avenge the narrow defeat inflicted on the Rest of the World by the Americas at West Lancashire Golf Club last year.

As ever some excellent golf clubs are hosting Sectional Qualifiers while the venues for the Regional Qualifiers form a set of clubs which it would be hard to better.

- Scottish – Loch Green GC, Troon, May 27.
- South West and South Wales – Burnham and Berrow GC, June 11.
- Midland – Warwickshire GC, June 26.
- South East – Ham Manor GC, June 27.
- Northern – Matfen Hall GC, July 9.
- National Final: Ganton GC, September 17 & 18.

Full day is packed with events to spell success for Scottish conference



Distinguished guests at the Scottish Region Conference

Over 160 greenkeepers, club officials and other interested parties from all over Scotland and further afield filled the conference suite at the Isle of Skye Hotel for the 1997 Scottish Region's annual conference, writes Elliott Small.

It was an excellent day in more ways than one as the weather outside was probably the best day we had had for several weeks. However, what was going on inside was enough to keep us from thinking too much about the glorious sunny day outside.

The conference was opened by the first Chairman of BIGGA, Walter Woods, and the morning was a succession of one interesting speaker after the other. Firstly Master Greenkeeper, Ian MacMil-

lan, Balbirnie Park, took us on a trip through the "History of Golf and Greenkeeping". This was followed by another of the McMillan clan (no relation, different spelling, same clan), Billy this time from Wildwood GC on "Keeping Greenkeeping Simple". Andrew Vaughan, from Eamonn Wall & Co then gave us some valuable "Tips for Trees" and never mentioned a chainsaw once, as my members usually suggest. To finish off the morning session Dr Brian Clifford, plant pathologist from Aberystwyth Research, tried to help us to understand some of the problems of disease in turf and how to manage it. An excellent morning deserved an excellent lunch and

that is what the Isle of Skye hotel served up to us.

What a tester for Derek Ross, past Captain of Dumfries and County Golf Club, with the hot spot directly after that lunch. He made sure no-one fell asleep with one of the best talks we have had on communication and co-operation between greenkeeper and committee. Carol Borthwick, Elmwood College, was her usual inimitable self as she again brought us up to date with the latest in greenkeeping education. And finally Jim Snow, National Director, USGA Green Section, spent an hour on the "Search for the Perfect Green Construction Method".

Fascinating all of them and we are indebted to the speakers for providing us with such an interesting day. To finish the proceedings in this the 10th anniversary year, after starting with Walter, the first Chairman of BIGGA, we were pleased to have Pat Murphy, the present Chairman. Our thanks go to the Isle of Skye Hotel for all their help in making this a successful day and we must not forget our two conference Chairmen, Sam Morrison, the Scottish Region Chairman, and Alasdair McLaren, Scottish Region Education Convener, and last, but definitely not least, the Scottish Region Patrons for their continued and valued sponsorship of this conference.

Quality, safety and attention to detail seals £250,000 deal

When Oswestry based contractor Cliff Evans Limited placed a £250,000 machinery order with Hayter several important aspects played a major role in the decision. Quality and safety being just two.

Gary Jones, Director of Cliff Evans, visited the Hayter factory where he had a chance to see for himself how closely every machine is checked and tested before leaving the site. Gary was also impressed with the team spirit that was evident throughout.

Facing stiff competition, the Hayter machines were put through their paces with the result, that orders were placed for a mixture of both Self Propelled Triples and Gang mowers.

Commenting on the outcome Gary Jones said, "we have a very close business relationship with Hayter, and have had for several years now. I am confident that the decision made to purchase this fleet of new machinery will more than justify our continuing loyalty".

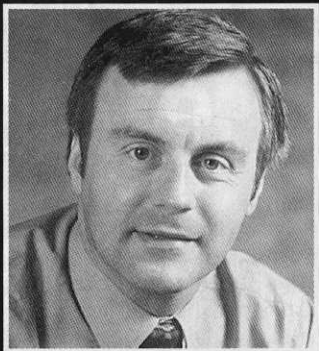
Operators have had the benefit of on-site training at their various sites via Hayter's Technical Support team, Robin Blackford and Gwyn Preece, who have successfully completed all installation work to the satisfaction of the operator concerned.

Robin Boyes, Territory Manager, said, "The operators are positive that the machines are the right ones for the work they are expected to do, they are strong, reliable and extremely easy to maintain."

President appointed

Graham Dale was elected Agricultural Engineers Association President for 1997/8 at the Association's AGM held at the Savoy Hotel, London recently.

Graham, Managing Director of Lely (UK) Ltd, has been Chairman of the AEA Outdoor Power Equipment Council for the last two years and a member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the past four years.



All set for the National

Cooden Beach Golf Club on the Sussex coast is preparing to welcome BIGGA members for the National Tournament which runs from August 4-6.

The programme can be found within this issue of *Greenkeeper International* and with entries limited to 81 booking early is strongly recommended.

Miracle Professional will again be sponsoring the tournament and they are delighted both with the attractive and challenging golf course, under the management of

Course Manager Stefan Antolik and the surrounding facilities.

The tournament banquet will be held on Tuesday August 5 in the clubhouse, while another highlight will be the Miracle Professional Social evening on the Monday, at the adjacent Cooden Beach Hotel, which will include a barbecue, entertainment and access to an open-air swimming pool.

As ever families will be welcomed to this traditional and ever-popular event.

Chippendale muscles in



Warrington based grass seed producer, British Seed Houses has announced the appointment of a new office sales executive in response to increased contracts and a more focussed sales drive.

Jonathan Chippendale, who recently joined the company, previously held positions within a number of landscape contract firms including Marbury Landscapes and Brophy Plc and will be responsible for the handling of national land-

scaping contracts within the agricultural and amenity sectors.

In response to his appointment, Jonathan said: "I am very pleased to be working for a company so highly regarded as British Seed Houses and I hope to make a significant contribution."

British Seed Houses is a leading producer of grass seed both within the amenity and agricultural sectors. Projects include the supply of seed to many of the country's top golf clubs as well as major amenity schemes and agricultural merchants.

Designers get low-down

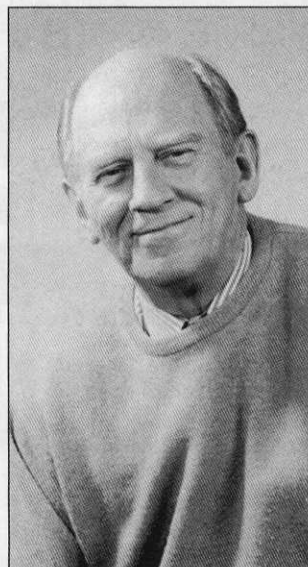
Over 20 golf course designers, architects and builders attended a seminar arranged by the ProSport Division of Hepworth Minerals and Chemicals (HMC) in mid March 1997. The principal speaker was George Shiels, consultant agronomist to, among others, the PGA European Tour.

The theme of his talk was the development of standards for the specification of root zones for golf green use. He traced the history of the USGA parameters

for the formulation of root zones and explained how they had been progressively improved and adapted to European use.

Sales Manager of HMC's ProSport product group, Tony Jacques, under the theme of 'Assuring Your Specification', explained how and which ProSport root zone formulations meet the USGA criteria and can be supplied with absolute consistency no matter what the size of the order or where in the UK it is delivered.

Raising awareness one of key aims for new BTLIA chairman



Gerry Wilkins was elected Chairman of the BTLIA at the recent AGM. The Association was formed in 1978 to regulate and improve the standards of system design and installation by companies specialising in sports turf irrigation, and was later enlarged to include landscape irrigation companies.

Gerry has worked for a number of irrigation companies in the UK and overseas since 1964 and is currently Sales Manager of British Overhead Irrigation. An enthusiastic supporter of the BTLIA, and a member of the Executive Committee since 1993, he succeeds Philip York who has been Chairman for the past two years.

In his inaugural remarks, Gerry paid tribute to Philip's work during his term of office. He stated that one of his main

tasks would be to raise awareness of the Association externally by developing closer links with organisations such as the Institute of Groundsmanship, BIGGA the Landscape Institute, the UKIA and the European Irrigation Association. He also referred to increasingly complex Health & Safety regulations and assured Members that the Association would give all possible assistance in this area: the newly-introduced H & S Manual was a practical example of this intention.

Under the guidance of its Secretary, David Halford, the BTLIA runs regular Diploma courses in modern irrigation design and practice at Myerscough College in Lancashire which are open to both Members and non members of the Association.

(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



Meetings, meetings... disciplinary meetings

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Yet another benefit of **BIGGA** membership



Three more firms join as Golden Key sponsors

Three new companies have become the latest to join BIGGA as Golden Key sponsors and the decision has been taken to close the programme at the current number of 20 Golden and six Silver Key companies.

Ritefeed joined at the beginning of April while Barenbrug and Watermation will take their places on July 1.

"We are pleased to bring the Golden and Silver Key programme up to quota with three new companies and are delighted to have their support," said BIGGA's Executive Director Neil Thomas.

"BIGGA's Education and Development Fund was established in January 1992 and has since gone from strength to strength having been given excellent support from both Golden and Silver key company members and individuals.



"We feel we have reached the appropriate number of contributing companies which are instrumental in enabling BIGGA to provide education and training opportunities for greenkeepers and advance the profession," he explained. Among the projects facilitated by the Education and Development Fund last year was the financing of the acclaimed Golf Course Ecology video, which complemented the book produced the previous year as well as the significant subsidising of national and regional training courses.

Ritefeed, Barenbrug and Watermation will be presented with their Golden Key plaques at BIGGA's 10th Anniversary Golf Day at Aldwark Manor on June 23.

Ransomes strengthens its support with new kit for PGA European Tour

Ransomes is to raise the level of support it provides to the PGA European Tour.

Strengthening the successful partnership forged over the past year, the additional assistance from Ransomes answers a request from the PGA European Tour's event staging department for the loan of light-treading turf vehicles to help prepare venues for four separate Tour events taking place within the British Isles during 1997.

The selected vehicles – Cushman Turf-Trucksters with transport boxes – will be in action for up to six weeks on each course assisting with the movement and installation of signs, banners and the stakes and ropes needed for spectator control. Using a dedicated turf vehicle for the job will eliminate the risk of surface marking prior to the tournaments, ensuring optimum pre-

sentation of all courses where the PGA European Tour has a staging responsibility.

The four events where the Cushmans will be in action are the Alamo English Open at Marriott Hanbury Manor Hotel; the Volvo PGA Championship at The Wentworth Club; the Smurfit European Open at the K Club, Dublin, and the One 2 One British Masters at the Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel, Golf and Country Club.

Ransomes was appointed an Official Supplier to the PGA European Tour in 1996 with Ransomes, Cushman and Ryan grass and turf maintenance equipment becoming the preferred greenkeeping machinery of the Tour and recommended for the preparation of all PGA European Tour venues until at least 1999.

The association between Ransomes and the Tour has flowered

during its first year as Ransomes answered calls for additional specialist machines to assist with course preparation prior to a number of events. According to the PGA European Tour's Director of Greenkeeping, Richard Stillwell, both the Czech Open and Moroccan Open owe their final success to Ransomes' prompt response and the effectiveness of the machines installed.

"I have nothing but praise for the way that Ransomes has reacted to our calls for specialist equipment and back-up support," he pointed out. "By being approachable, responsive and reliable, Ransomes has made many new friends since joining the Tour, proving through its actions that it is prepared to back the Tour, its selected courses and their owners, managers and greenkeepers to the hilt."



Distributor wins top award

Otterbine presented TIL of Ringwood, Hampshire the 'Otterbine European Distributor of the Year Award' for their performance in 1996. Peter Roberts, TIL's Managing Director, accepted the award at the GCSAA Show in Las Vegas.

In 1996, TIL achieved a 70% increase in Otterbine sales and provided the opportunity for five of the company's technicians to be factory trained in servicing Otterbine products. In the last 18 months, TIL has organised two, one day-day seminars on aeration and water quality management.

Commenting on this award,

Charlie Barebo Otterbine President said, "TIL is more than just a distributor. They have adopted an educational, consultant-like approach to water quality management. In addition, TIL has taken a leading role in educating the UK market in respect to holistic, environmentally sound water quality and lake management. As a result, the market as a whole benefits".

■ Pictured: Peter Roberts (centre) receives the 'Otterbine European Distributor of the Year Award' from Charlie Barebo (right) in the company of Quentin Allardice. TIS Scotland.



Former opera singer and golf club secretary, Paula

Humphries, is the person chosen

to fill the formidable shoes of Gordon Child as Regional Administrator for the South West and South Wales Region.

Paula trained as a singer at the London Opera Centre before winning a scholarship to the world famous La Scala in Milan.

She toured as a soprano throughout Italy as well as performing in Strasbourg and Vienna before returning to the UK permanently.

She is still in demand as a singer but recently fitted her engagements around golf club secretary work at Liphook in Hampshire, Tyrells Wood, Leatherhead, and, most recently, Downs Credition in Devon.

A 24 handicap golfer Paula is also a former Lady Captain of Alton Golf Club, in Hampshire.

"I am looking forward to the role and, in particular, to getting to know existing members and recruiting new members," said Paula.