



## A guide to who's who at BIGGA

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Bonallack, OBE

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## Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

The Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, please contact BIGGA on 01347 833800

### Golden Key Circle Company Members

Company	Tel: Head Office
Avancrop	01934 820868
Advanta	01529 302500
Amazone Ground Care	01579 351155
Aventis	01277 301114
Bernhard and Company Ltd	01788 811600
Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd	01428 661222
Gem Professional	01254 356611
John Deere Ltd	01949 860491
Hayter Ltd	01279 723444
Kubota UK Ltd	01844 214500
PGA European Tour	01344 842881
Rain Bird	01273 891326
Rigby Taylor Ltd	01483 535657
Rolawn	01904 608661
Oomis	01460 241939
Scotts UK Professional	01473 830492
Textron Turf Care	01473 270000
The Toro Company (Lely UK)	01202 319987

### Individual Members

Mike Eastwood, J H Fry, J H Greasley,  
David S Robinson, Stuart Townsend

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Company	Tel: Head Office
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Heath Lambert Ltd	0113 246 1313
Sisis Equipment Ltd	01625 503030
Supaturf Products Ltd	01455 639639
Weed Free	07000 481011

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Robert Maibusch MG, Richard S Mullen, Elliott R  
Small, Steven Tierney, Raymond J Warrander

# September 2000

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# Greenkeeper

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# Greenkeeper

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**10** Gordon McKillop STRlves to be the Best

## A degree of accuracy?

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, wrote recently of his concerns regarding "vacuous" degree courses that are now being offered by nation's universities and colleges, describing them as "quasi-academic degrees".

To highlight his point he listed some of the prime culprits - Knitwear, Media Studies, Beauty Therapy and Pig Enterprise Management. However, the degree course with which he chose to launch his list was Golf Course Management.

He followed this up, in the article printed in The Sunday Times, by adding- "what is the point of students completing a course only to find that their degree adds little or nothing to their career prospects".

The comments were jumped on by the media and other courses were soon lumped in among those initially mentioned including Madonna Studies, Beer making, Contemporary Circus and Stand-Up Comedy.

It gave the opinion shapers of the day the chance to mount their soap boxes and have a pop. Ruth Lea, the Head of Policy at the Institute of Directors, commented that employers had given these degrees the real thumbs down.

"What is worrying about many of these degrees is that they don't give specific skills and they are not even particularly academically rigorous," she announced to the press.

In fairness to Chris Woodhead, in general terms the point he was making had some validity. While ideal for evening classes, hobbies should have little place as full blown degree courses.

However, I would hope that given time to reflect on his comments he might feel that Golf Course Management should be excluded from the shamed list.

I don't know if Chris Woodhead is a golfer but I'd wager that he has little idea of what is taught on a Golf Course Management Course. If he did he would know that it includes Plant Biology and Physiology; Turf Grass Microbiology and Horticultural Biotechnology and that students are prepared for the monumental demands that are placed on the modern day Golf Course Manager.

All are academically taxing subjects and prepare the student for the rigours of the outside world. Students who have completed such courses can command healthy salaries from golf clubs and look forward to long and rewarding careers. In fact the courses represent everything that a modern degree course should.

Let's face it, many traditional degree courses don't exactly offer a direct route into the employment market. How many jobs for Fine Art Critics or Mediaeval Historians do you see advertised in Job Centres?

The whole affair is yet another example of those with limited knowledge jumping to conclusions that people who work on golf courses do little more than cut grass and empty litter bins. It can only be damaging for green-keeping's educational courses to be derided in such a cavalier fashion.

If I were to comment on Chris Woodhead's article in much the same way as his schools' inspectors comment on the work of the nation's teachers I would say that it was "thought provoking in parts but lacking adequate preparation and a thorough knowledge of the subject matter.

"Must do better"!

**Scott MacCallum**  
Editor

