

Refund of Fees Scheme

Remember, that in addition to the BIGGA Scholarships, supported by Ransomes/Jacobsen, BIGGA members may apply for an 80% refund of education and training fees up to a maximum of £250. Members must have paid for the course ie. not golf clubs and refunds are paid on completion of the course. For full details and an application form contact Sami at BIGGA House.

Greenkeeper Training Committee Health and Safety Wall Chart

The GTC has sent copies of their Health and Safety Wall Chart to all Golf Clubs in the UK and Ireland. The Wall Charts, which were sent to Golf Club Secretaries, have been designed for Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to record the training of their staff and when they become competent in operating machinery and other equipment on the golf course. The Wall Charts were sent to Golf Club Secretaries to raise their awareness and that of the employer to the importance of staff training and the recording of competence.

Each pack contains a wall chart, pens and coloured dots plus guidance on how the chart should be used. Any Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper who has not received a copy of the Wall Chart should contact their Club Secretary. If the Secretary cannot help then contact the GTC on 01347 838640.

Watch out for the introduction of individual records of training and competence which will complement the GTC Wall Chart. They will be issued by BIGGA in early 2003.

BIGGA Education and Training Scholarships supported by Ransomes/Jacobsen

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A Textron Company

Thanks to generous support from Ransomes/Jacobsen, BIGGA has been able to award its first Higher Education Scholarships.

Designed to help greenkeeper members of BIGGA move into higher education, scholarships are awarded for those studying for the award of S/NVQ Level 4, Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelors Degree and Masters Degree. Scholarships are available to those members starting their course in 2002.

Scholarships awarded so far are:

Master of Science in Sports Surface Technology at Cranfield University.
Peter Jones, Allan Blizzard, Ian Somerville and Barry Dore.
Higher National Certificate at Elmwood College, Lee Bridge and Laurence McCrory, and at Pencoed College, Peter Lacey.
NVQ Level 4 at Reaseheath College, Darryl Smethurst.

The amount of scholarship depends on the course being followed and on individual circumstances but, so far, a total of £7200 has been awarded.

Future editions of Greenkeeper International will look at the progress being made by each scholar.



Address letters to: **Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to: scott@bigga.co.uk**

Thanks for the Backing

Now that my recent wrongful redundancy case has almost come to an end, I would just like to thank Peter Boyd for his backing throughout the last 20 months, which was a great help to me. If I can be of any assistance to you or any other member regarding this type of situation do not hesitate to contact me.

Derek Green
Inverurie, Aberdeenshire

Great Idea in Theory

After recently reading a couple of articles, one by Richard Windows of the STRI in September's edition of Greenkeeper International, and the other by Gordon Child, in September's edition of the GTC's On Course, I feel I must take issue with the subject matter.

Both articles were championing the benefits of early aeration work, such as vertidrainage, hollow coring, overseeding, top dressing etc, suggesting that this work could take place for a couple of weeks in August as opposed to October. Great idea in theory, but how are small golf clubs with a small staff, tight budget and a lack of machinery supposed to achieve this?

At my club there is a greenstaff of four and if we attempted this type of maintenance programme in August it would be all hands to the pump. Does the grass stop growing and divot holes fill in by themselves during these two weeks, or however long it takes? As for Mr Child's suggestion that we make more use of the long daylight hours, a tight overtime budget

and a lack of finance to hire in extra staff wouldn't allow this. It is a big enough problem trying to get finance for decent wages, modern machinery, and renovation and construction projects, unless your club has a membership in excess of 800, which ours doesn't.

I noticed that Mr Windows writing about minimal disruption to the playing surface and of higher temperatures and intense sunlight aiding a quick recovery. There could be a drought shortly after the completion of the work and if, like our club, you don't have an irrigation system, you would be in real bother.

Also, what about the golfers? Golfers in this part of the country don't want their season disrupted in August and extended into October. Having discussed this subject with our members they made it clear they don't want disruption to the playing surface in August and, being a keen golfer myself, I agree with them. I have always carried out deep aeration work in early October and we have never had a problem with it as we have always had successful results.

Disregarding the wishes of members - your employers - is a risky game as it is they who pay the wages. Then again, maybe this isn't a proactive enough attitude for some people, but that's another story.

As I mentioned earlier, it's a great idea in theory, but Gordon Child doesn't speak on behalf of all Greenkeepers/Course Managers. He speaks on behalf of the ones employed by wealthy golf clubs, where staffing and financial resources are not a problem. He certainly doesn't speak on behalf of me.

Sidney Mercer
Head Greenkeeper, Skelmorlie GC, Ayrshire