

Scholarships

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BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP

Lee Bridge and Peter Lacey describe their progress towards an HNC, part funded by a Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarship

It is now some nine months since I started my scholarship studying towards my HNC in golf course management (distance learning) and it seems to have flown by. I really don't know where the time goes. Before you know it we will all be out on our courses struggling to keep up with the grass and working our socks off as usual. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing although I suppose it is a bit of a mixed blessing really. On one hand it's nice to be out there with the warmer weather but, on the other, does the grass really have to grow that much?

On the college front it is going really well, I have received some really positive feedback on most of my assignments so far and personally I am pleased about that.

As I am writing this update I have just recently sent off a tutor marked assignment on health and safety legislation, and am awaiting feedback. This subject is probably not the most popular one among all those in the industry but the way this unit has been tackled is quite unique. Instead of the usual reams and reams of paper to sift through it's all conveniently placed on one single cd-rom including loads of extra bits as well. Being quite a complex subject there are loads of up-to-date information on the disc, ppe assessments and noise assessments to name just a couple.

The disc is divided into two main themes - employment legislation and health and safety legislation. After you have absorbed all the information on the disc you are required to carry out three separate assignments on each subject. These become progressively harder as you reach the main assignment. Starting with about 20 questions which ensure you have understood the subject matter, then progressing to the tutor marked assessments which involves four more in depth tasks to carry out. These

tasks are designed to show your tutor that you have understood the subject and can apply the information to the tasks.

One of the tasks in the employment legislation section is to produce a notice about arrangements for taking holidays in the coming year, bearing in mind club and district championships are being held on your golf course. The section is then completed with the main assignments which are made up partly of tasks from the previous assessment. You are also asked to produce a formal style report evaluating whether your golf club complies with current legislation on each subject matter ie. employment legislation and a health and safety audit on your course.

Overall I have found the college course very worthwhile and interesting and I am thoroughly enjoying it. All the units I have completed have been easy to follow and understand, and all are well presented.

Starting the course last September with the unit about communication, presenting complex communication for vocational purposes. This unit is divided into three main assessments with some other tasks to carry out as well. The main assessments on this unit mirror the three main areas of communication with these being writing, oral presentation and holding



Lee Bridge

meetings. I have completed the writing section which required you to write a formal report on the machinery at your workplace. The other two sections will be taken when I attend the college later in the year, although I have already done a fair bit of work towards them and now it's all down to my talking skills.

The other two units I have been working on are more my scene really, although we shouldn't knock communication as we wouldn't get that far without it. The other units are about soil science and turf grass science and they also contain various assessments on different subjects.

The turf grass science unit started with an assessment on pests, diseases, disorders and weeds which I have completed, but for some identification work to do at college.

The next assessment was quite a big task with a 4,000 word presentation about the classification, anatomy and physiology of the grass plant. This ended up being 15 pages long (including pictures and the like) and I was glad when that one was finished. On a positive note, you will all have to look out for it in your local bookstore I think it's going to be released on paperback - volume one is out next week (no, not really!)

The next assessment was about soils as a growing medium. This was not quite as big as the previous one but still ended up being eight pages long. The last assignment in this section was on nutrients and soil additives and this ended up being 13 pages long. I think I may have got just a bit carried away with this one. Once I get my teeth into an interesting subject I just keep going, although I did have some great articles on the subject mostly from old Greenkeeper International magazines which came in handy. It's amazing when you look through the old back issues the vast array of information you can find. Although, be warned, it has led to a few altercations at home with my girlfriend. With all the magazines strewn all over the floor as I frantically search for any relevant articles it all creates a bit of a mess, which doesn't go down well. It's a constant battle with the Hoover as I try and save the magazines from being sucked up or even trodden on by my dog, Duke.

So far I have not required much help from the college but my dealings with them have been very good and they are very friendly and easy to accommodate any queries you may have.

Well that's as far as I have got so far but before I finish may I take this opportunity to wish all the fellow scholarship and other college students out there the best of luck with your studies this year. If you are not studying why not give it a go as there are loads of different courses out there to choose from - there's one out there for everyone, be it big/small or long/short. You're never too old or young to acquire new skills. Why not even apply for a scholarship yourself and you can not only improve your knowledge on greenkeeping matters, you can also apply your newly acquired knowledge on to your own courses. Anyone out there who is interested in taking the same course as myself and has some queries about

it then why not give Elmwood College a call. If you feel the query is best answered by me then I would be more than willing to help you out although it is probably best to write to me. You can find me in the golf directory under the South East Section and I will try to answer your query as quickly as I can.

Peter Lacey outlines the work he is carrying out for his HNC at Pencoed College.

We are currently coming to the end of our first term of study and are looking forward to a deserved break. The course is very intense and requires a lot of research to be carried out utilising both the college and local libraries and via the internet (much more scientific work in relation to golf greenkeeping and turf management has been carried out in the States, than in the UK).

A great deal of time needs to be committed to study if course assessments are to be completed on time and with enough information and detail. In most cases a few hours work is carried out every evening including weekends.

Much of my allotted scholarship has been spent purchasing a number of books that will assist me with this course work and will then become a source of reference for both myself and any of my staff who undergo college training. It has also enabled me to purchase useful technical drawing equipment and stationery, including a never-ending supply of colour ink cartridges.

At the end of this term we will have completed a number of modules, including plant protection, which encompasses weeds, pests and plant diseases. IT, inclusive of Microsoft Word, Xcel and Power-point. Surveying, Golf Course Design and Sports Ground Maintenance.

Altogether an interesting and varied array of topics, which not only keeps the grey matter ticking over, but near to boiling point on occasions. I would definitely recommend this course to those who have already completed NVQ level 3 and wish to progress further. All in all, so far, so good, tough albeit rewarding and looking forward to picking up from where we left off next term.

Incidentally, all who are on this course at Pencoed have now received scholarships from Ransomes Jacobsen and we are all grateful indeed to the company for their generous support.



Peter Lacey