



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

Unlock the doors to progress through BIGGA's Education and Development Fund - the key to a great future for greenkeepers, golf clubs and the game of golf.

Golden and Silver Key Membership is available to both companies and individuals.

For details, please contact Ken Richardson on 01347 833800 or via ken@bigga.co.uk

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Education Update

Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager, reports on his trip to the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in Atlanta, USA.

A week in Harrogate followed by a week in Atlanta, attending the Golf Industry Show, has shown me that we achieved a great deal at Harrogate Week with a minimum of resources. Yes, the Golf Club Show is larger, they have more education opportunities and more people attend, but their resources, both financial and human are much greater than ours.

As others have indicated elsewhere, there is a threat to Harrogate Week 2007 from some of the larger machinery companies deciding not to exhibit at BTME. However, we plan to have even more educational opportunities targeted at all levels of greenkeeper, at golf club secretaries, at groundsmen and at golf club professionals. We have had some excellent feedback from delegates at Continue to Learn 2006 and we are using that feedback to design our programme for 2007. You can have your say on what you would like to see included in the Harrogate Week programme by contacting me at BIGGA HOUSE.

What were my impressions of the Golf Club Show? Considering that the Show was scheduled to take place in New Orleans, then in Houston, it was a miracle that the GCSAA managed to put together such an extensive education programme and trade show. Overall, the Show was very much like Harrogate but on a larger scale.

American superintendents have the same sort of problems as British greenkeepers and their education programme contained subjects such as 'Strategies for poa annua prevention and control' through to 'Speaking with impact' both subjects included at Harrogate. Other similarities were seminars on Microsoft Powerpoint, Excel and Word, plus management subjects such as Financial Management and Project management. Some subjects such as Managing an Hispanic Workforce or Spanish for Golf Course Managers may not be quite so popular however.

What about Atlanta? Well it was big, cold (around 34F, 1°C), wet and expensive. It was also full of British and European greenkeepers. Highlights of Atlanta were the Coca Cola museum, an aquarium and dozens of shopping malls. However, the highlight of my week was a trip to Augusta National.

I am very grateful to Brad at Augusta for allowing us to visit, to Jim for hosting us so well and to Stan Zontek for arranging it all. We spent a full morning touring the maintenance facilities and the golf course and it was apparent that customer care was their top priority. We have all heard of the Augusta factor that happens each spring when the US Masters is on TV, but being there, walking the course and talking to the greenkeepers gives you a completely different view of the place.

Yes, it is a wealthy course, they have plenty of staff and plenty of machinery but the way that they manage the course is no different from many other



courses. Just one example was the use of green sand for top dressing so that golfers did not notice what had occurred.

Now that I am back in the office and my jet lag is almost gone, my thoughts turn to the help that we can give greenkeepers to develop their careers through education and training.

BIGGA HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Thanks to continued sponsorship from Ransomes Jacobsen, we can, once again, offer Higher Education Scholarships to BIGGA members. Scholarships are awarded to greenkeepers attending or about to attend a course of higher education, for example N/SVQ Level 4, HNC, HND, Foundation Degree, BSc/BA or MSC.

Successful scholars are expected to keep BIGGA informed of their progress, to supply educational material for Greenkeeper International and agree to be photographed and interviewed at their graduation. Scholarships are usually awarded to cover half tuition fees.

TORO STUDENT OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Application forms for this year's competition will be sent to training providers this month. If you do not receive a copy by March 31 then please contact us at BIGGA HOUSE.

The winner in 2005, Alan Pierce, had an interesting visit to the Golf Industry Show in Atlanta. His flight back to the North East of the US was cancelled due to heavy snow and he was stuck in Atlanta until the airports opened again. It did give him time to complete his revision for his final exams.