



Welcome

EASY START TO THE YEAR – SOME HOPE!

It's always nice to ease yourself into a new year, shake off the excesses of Christmas, dust off the old new year resolutions ready for another crack at making them stick and make the most of the January sales.

At least from what I remember, it's nice to ease yourself into a new year. Since joining BIGGA that concept has been blown clean out of the water. With Harrogate Week coming in the third week of January each year there is no time for such luxuries and we have to hit the ground of the new year running at full pelt. And this year more than ever!

Since January 1 we have put the finishing touches to, and followed through, with another excellent week in Harrogate; set the wheel in motion for talks with the IOG on a potential strategic merger and, sadly, said goodbye to a Board of Management member.

Everyone was aware of the background to Harrogate Week 2007, and the fact that some of the larger companies had opted not to exhibit, so it's a great delight and relief to report that the whole occasion was a resounding success.

It would be wrong to suggest that the larger companies were not missed, of course they were and we'll be delighted to welcome them back in 2008, but we heard from numerous exhibitors that people were prepared to spend more time on their stands than in previous years and that on many occasions business was conducted.

But right in the middle of the final touches being put into place for Harrogate, a delegation from the BIGGA Board of Management met with a similar group from the IOG to discuss the potential benefits of a strategic merger of the two bodies. A very productive meeting concluded with unanimous agreement on both sides to continue discussions for the benefit of the respective memberships and the sports turf industry as a whole. Obviously no decisions will be taken without full consultation with members, and if nothing ultimately comes from it at least the concept will have been explored, but both sides will be looking into the future with open minds and that can never be a bad thing.

Let's just wait and see how things proceed.

Harrogate Week started with sorrow in the hearts of quite a number of visitors when news reached us of the death, in his prime, of Board of Management member, Raymond Day. Raymond was Course Manager at East Sussex National Golf Club and a BIGGA man through and through.

I had the pleasure of playing golf with him at our annual golf day last year, just before his illness was diagnosed, and although, much to his dismay, my golf didn't come close to matching the standard of the 2 handicapper, he carried the team manfully – if not quietly – and we had a super day. Little did I know then that it would be the last time I would see him.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

JOINING FORCES

Eagle and Planette, have joined forces to become the largest supplier of guides to golf clubs throughout the UK and Europe.

The driving force at Eagle and Planette, Phil McInley and Brian Winteridge, are determined to reinforce their already strong market position by delivering even better value, and offering a wider range of marketing tools and income generating opportunities for golf clubs. Phil McInley, MD of Eagle, explains their thinking: "Planette is a strong brand name in this sector. Eagle deals largely with clubs and club secretaries, so combining with Brian and his company creates new opportunities for us in the club professional sector where Planette is widely respected for its course guides. Similarly, Planette's customers will now have greater access to Eagle's market-leading range of club and course signage, scorecards, green fee tickets, bag tags and other marketing and course accessories.



This synergy will be an ideal platform on which to expand the Eagle brand throughout 2007."

BIGGA AND IOG EXPLORE STRATEGIC MERGER



Geoff Webb IOG Chief Executive (left) and John Pemberton BIGGA Chief Executive (right).

On Thursday the 18th of January representatives of the boards from the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) convened and The Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) unanimously agreed to explore in depth the possibilities and potential of a strategic merger for the wider benefit of their members and the Sports Turf Industry.

John Pemberton, BIGGA Chief Executive, commented, "The potential unification of BIGGA and The IOG presents a major opportunity for the turf management industry to influence the future both commercially and politically for the benefit of all members."

Geoff Webb, IOG Chief Executive, commented, "this agreement is an opportunity for the membership of both organisations and for the unification of the Industry in general."

BIGGA'S NEW WEBSITE GOES LIVE AT HARROGATE

BIGGA's revamped Website – bigga.org – went live during Harrogate Week. The interactive site, with full content management capabilities, will offer BIGGA members many more tools and facilities and be updated on a much more regular basis.

Designed by York-based company Stone Soup, the website includes a calculation function enabling greenkeepers to work out sizes and quantities for tasks they are about to do; weather forecasting; downloadable job descriptions while the new bulletin board will accept images giving greenkeepers, for example, the opportunity to display and seek advice on diseased turf.



"We are delighted with the new site and feel sure that BIGGA members will benefit immensely from the tools and functions it carries. With full content management we will be able to keep it up to date on a much more frequent basis than in the past and we would urge people, who do not already do so, to bookmark it and visit regularly," said BIGGA Communication Manager, Scott MacCallum.

ICELANDIC GOLF DAY AWARD



Ransomes Jacobsen and their local distributor MHG of Reykjavik, sponsored the Icelandic

Greenkeepers Association's annual golf tournament, held at Golfklubbur Kidjaberg, 90 miles northwest of the island's capital.

82 greenkeepers representing 65 courses in Iceland took part in the event at the 18-hole course, which is situated on the river Hvítá in a spectacular landscape of lakes and mountains.

Scott Forrest, Ransomes Jacobsen's North European Sales Manager, who hosted the event said: "Over 70% of the courses in Iceland are maintained using Ransomes Jacobsen equipment. That's a testament to our distributor, MHG, who have been tremendously active in the country. The turnout was very impressive and it was great day's golfing in a truly spectacular setting capped off by a superb dinner and prize giving in the evening."

TRAINING SCHEME

Lely (UK) Ltd have recently employed the first recruits to their own Apprenticeship Training Scheme. The St. Neots, Cambridgeshire based company has been investigating a joint college / workplace scheme for several months and now has three trainees working within its many departments.

Lely has enjoyed substantial growth for many years and sees the Apprenticeship Training Scheme as an integral part of the company's expansion. The scheme also embraces recommendations made by the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) who has voiced concern at the lack of such apprenticeship schemes available within the industry.

The training scheme lasts for four years mixing academic, workshop and field experience into a superb work package, culminating in the students

attaining a Grade 3 NVQ in Engineering. Lely's partner in this enterprise is Writtle College in Essex, where students will experience course work in hydraulics and electronics while increasing their knowledge and skills in practical day-to-day activity.



RAYMOND DAY

It is with a heavy heart that I find myself writing a few words on behalf of his friends on the sad passing of Raymond Day, one of the Big characters of The Greenkeeping world.

Raymond passed away on Jan the 21st after a hard fought fight with cancer. During his illness Raymond strove to overcome the many problems that arose in his usual dogmatic and forthright manner and with great humility, and he had the great support of his wife, Jill, his two stepsons and his brother, Colin.

Throughout his illness Raymond carried on working at his much loved East Sussex National as long as his health would allow, and I know he would like me to record his thanks for the tremendous support he received from Scott, and his Greens Staff, and from Derek Howe and all the management.

Raymond was an out and out Greenkeeper who lived for his job and his Golf. He started his career north of the border as an apprentice at Erskine GC

before becoming Head Greenkeeper at Pitreavie GC and Gleddoch House GC. When he moved south he became Head Greenkeeper at Ifield GC before becoming Course Manager at Sundridge Park GC and latterly East Sussex National GC. He was a category one golfer and represented his county on many occasions and was still playing scratch team golf at 49 off a handicap of two.

Raymond had also played a great part in BIGGA. He was a Section Secretary of the Sussex Section for seven years and Chairman of the South East Region for six years and was the current South East Board of Management member of the Association.

We are all proud to say that Raymond Day was our friend and companion and we will miss his great booming laugh, his uncompromising approach to greenkeeping and his willingness to help others.

The world of Greenkeeping will be a sadder place without him.

George Barr

BIGGA AND AGCS LAUNCH NEW SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Golf clubs could be enjoying lower insurance premiums thanks to the launching of a new Health and Safety Management system which has been the product of a joint initiative by the Association of Golf Club Secretaries (AGCS) and BIGGA.

The system which has been developed with the help of some of the best known Health and Safety specialists in the country ensures that there is a standard format for carrying out risk assessments in all aspects and areas of a golf club.

Based on Health and Safety Executive guidance, the SMS will enable golf clubs to set their health and safety policy; specify their club's organisation; list hazards and assess risks; plan for the future; introduce a review procedure and agree where and how to audit their system. Additionally, the system will allow Club Managers to access a wide range of data on a range of hazards.

"We are delighted that the effort both ourselves, the AGCS and all the people, who have given up many hours to work on this project, has come to fruition. We are convinced that the new system will be of huge benefit to everyone who uses it and help to ensure that golf clubs are much safer and healthier places for employees and golfers," said BIGGA Chief Executive John Pemberton.

"We are delighted that this example of two golfing bodies working closely together has proved so successful," he added

The system will be available to all BIGGA and AGCS members through their websites in early April.



FORMER GREENKEEPER OF THE YEAR TAKES HIS CURTAIN CALL!



David with Roger Fitton

Thorpe Wood and Orton Meadows Golf Courses at Peterborough say goodbye and happy semi-retirement to their Superintendent Greenkeeper David Walden after 34 years.

David started working for the Peterborough Development Corporation in 1972, planting the first trees for Thorpe Wood golf course. He was offered the job of greenkeeper at Thorpe Wood in 1973. The golf course, designed by Peter Alliss and Dave Thomas, opened for the first time in 1975 and David was put in charge of a team of greenkeepers some of whom are still lovingly tending the course today.

In 1979 he oversaw the building of the 12 hole Pitch and Putt course at Orton Meadows. This was followed in 1980 with the overseeing of the start of the construction of the 12 hole golf course at Orton

Meadows which was designed by Dennis and Roger Fitton.

Following the wind-down of the Peterborough Development Corporation, David was made redundant in 1987. The golf courses became part of Nene Park Trust and the management of both Thorpe Wood and Orton Meadows was taken on by Dennis and Roger Fitton who were already installed as golf professionals having moved to Peterborough from Walsall. David was employed by them to run the two courses with two teams of greenkeepers under him.

David has always been a champion for education and training of greenkeepers and himself gained qualifications in turfgrass management, an HNC in sportsturf management and a Master Greenkeeping qualification.

In 1994 at the age of 50, David was awarded the ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award after being nominated by the East of England British and International Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA). This gained him a trip to the mighty San Francisco golf exhibition. David has also set and marked examination papers for the Institute of Groundsmanship and college courses all over the country and has completed an HNC course in greenkeeping.

David won't be sitting idle in his "retirement" but will be engaged in passing on his vast experience of specialist machinery to a new age of up and coming greenkeepers.

DRIVETIME SHOW

Master Greenkeeper, David Murdoch enjoyed a once in a lifetime experience when the Chris Evans Drivetime radio show was broadcast from his parent's (Mary and Bob Murdoch) house in Auchterderran.

The show was the first of four that the Radio 2 DJ chose to broadcast from people's homes in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England.

The basis was that all the names of cities, towns and villages from these countries were put into a tombola and then one was drawn out from each country. Residents of the place drawn out were then invited to put their case forward as to why the show should be broadcast from their house.

"My dear old mum did this and the rest is history," said David who is Course Manager at Liphook GC in Hampshire, "The day itself was great fun, although a bit chaotic. All in all a wonderful experience."



Chris Evans with David's girlfriend Deb.

GTC PLAYS KEY ROLE IN FLEXIBLE LEARNING

The GTC has played a major role in the development of higher education learning within the greenkeeping sector.

This development is a direct response to requests from the industry to help further the lifelong learning plan supported by the government for industry, according to Wayne Roberts, curriculum leader for greenkeeping and horticulture at Elmwood College, Fife.

The interest in the delivery of higher education into the greenkeeping and sportsturf industry has been met with the development of HNC, HND, Foundation Degree and First Degree courses in Golf Course management and Turf Science.

"What makes these courses interesting is the accessibility to these programmes of study through the various options of delivery that are available to the industry to ensure that both the qualification aims are met and the 'employability' of the learner is maintained through the balance of academic understanding linked with vocational experience and career relevance," said Wayne.

Greenkeepers can now study with the provider of their choice, through full time, part time and distance learning options and at an agreed time scale that meets the needs of the learner, the industry and the awarding body.

The main benefit to the individual is that distance is no barrier to learning with HE qualifications now available online. With learning

packages only a click away, the office at work, the spare bedroom at home or the kitchen table can become the classroom as well.

"This is an important development because it now provides access to learning for Greenkeepers and Course Managers who cannot give up employment to study full time but wish to continue their professional development," Wayne said.

"But just as much as the learner gets the direct benefit of the qualification, the employer and the golf course also benefit too, by providing the existing workforce with access to up to date knowledge and skills which can only help to benefit the long term of interests of the business.

"Here at Elmwood College we are continually working closely with the greenkeeping industry, the GTC and other industry partners to develop a range of HE qualifications that meet the needs of the industry and yet are flexible enough to provide bespoke learning opportunities for individuals undertaking the programme" he added.

One student who has benefited from the HE programme at Elmwood College is Mark Bewley. Mark, originally from Dublin, was working in the south of France when he came to Elmwood to complete his HNC in Golf Course Management - While studying he also received an R&A scholarship of £1,000 for being an outstanding student.

The HNC course helped to open up new opportunities for Mark including joining Gerry Byrne

and his crew at the K Club in Co. Kildare, hosting the European Open and of course the recent Ryder Cup.

"But what of the future?" said Wayne. "With an HE qualification supporting extensive vocational experience, Mark is returning to his native Dublin to be an assistant at the Grange Golf Club and taking on new responsibilities including the installation of new irrigation system under the direction of Head Greenkeeper, Jon Palmer another successful Elmwood HNC Graduate."

The success that Mark has enjoyed helps to highlight the important link that must be developed between the qualification, the industry and the progression opportunities that it can provide.

As HE qualifications improve not only their relevance and recognition within the industry, so will the opportunities available to graduates.

Over the past five years several students studying on our HE programmes have gone on to not only develop their professional qualifications through BSc and MSc programmes at university, but also develop and widen their vocational experience.

They have successfully obtained key industry positions such as course managers and developed into new industry areas such as course consultancy and research and development where their first hand knowledge and experience of the greenkeeping industry makes for an extremely employable asset to the organisation.

ACCIDENT REPORTING AND HEALTH & SAFETY WORKSHOPS

The Northern Region is holding a practical Accident Reporting and Health & Safety Workshop at Bradford GC on Thursday, March 29. The workshop will run from 9am until around 4pm and will involve practical group exercises looking at a simulated vehicle accident, H&S hazards in the greenkeeping shed, risk assessment on a hole and a confrontation with a golf club official – plus discussion on the use of pesticides and insecticides.

Attendance is open to BIGGA Members and golf club officials. Invitations will be sent out to BIGGA members and golf club secretaries in early February. Refreshments on arrival and lunch will be provided.

For more information please contact Peter Larter, Northern Region Administrator on: 01476 550115 or email: petelarter972@aol.com

The Midland Region of BIGGA held a Practical Accident Reporting and Health & Safety workshop at Gay Hill GC last November, 16.

It was attended by 64 BIGGA members and Golf Club Officials, who spent the day involved in practical group exercises deciding what to do at a simulated vehicle accident, spotting health and safety hazards in the greenkeeping sheds, carrying out a risk assessment on the 17th hole, and managing a confrontation with a golf club official. The day proved very successful and thought provoking, and is being used as a model for future regional workshops.

The Region's thanks go to Gay Hill GC for hosting the event superbly, to T H White for providing the accident vehicle, to Paul Woodham (Course Manager

at Gay Hill GC) whose original idea it was, to Frank Newberry, Jon Allbutt, Richard Minton and Ken Richardson for facilitating the day with great skill, and finally to the delegates without who the day would not have happened. The photo below shows one of the groups spotting hazards in the sheds.



HERITAGE ACCESS GUIDE SCOOPS PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund publication Easy Access to Historic Landscapes has won the Landscape Policy Award and the President's Award for the UK's most outstanding project by the landscape profession at the Landscape Institute Awards.

The comprehensive guidance for making historic landscapes easily accessible for visitors with disabilities was commended by judges for being "of excellent quality in terms of clarity, intelligence of advice, thoroughness of research and visual layout", "a refreshing approach" and "a very good resource pack for both professional and lay reader".

INDIA OPENS UP FOR SWAN

The Karnataka Golf Association, perhaps the premier club in India, will over the next two years see the renovation of its 30-year-old golf course by Swan Golf Designs, International Golf Course Architects from Essex.

Following Howard Swan's initial evaluation of the course last spring, the Club's council and membership approved the two-year renovation which began in January 2007.

Each phase will take six months, being completed with the regrassing of greens with dwarf Bermuda, and fairways and roughs with Tifway 419. Each will be completed and grown in before the monsoon season.

The renovation works, which will encompass a lengthening of the course to some 7200 yards, some design revisions to improve safety together with greens, tees and bunkers reconstruction throughout, and extensive fairway drainage.

EDUCATIONAL BURSARY

The first winner of a new competition sponsored by The Toro Company, and run by the English Region of the Club Managers Association of Europe (CMAE), has been announced.

Amber Rawson, of the Reform Club, London, won the Club Managers Diploma Bursary for 2007. Amber received a Toro educational bursary of £1000, which will fund her first year's fees to attend the CMAE's Management Development Programme to study for the Club Managers' Diploma. The programme, developed with support from Elmwood College, is the first step to becoming a Certified Club Manager. Amber, who is

assistant house manager at the Reform Club, will also have a year's CMAE membership fees paid.

Richard Corbett, assistant to the golf operations manager at Woburn Golf Club, was runner-up and received a year's free membership of CMAE.

To win the award, entrants had to submit the best 400-word essay on why they believed the Club Managers' Diploma is very relevant to clubs. The competition was open to all supervisors and managers of the 500-plus clubs in the CMAE's English Region, which includes golf, country, tennis, city and athletics among others.

25 YEARS SERVICE

Julian Sykes Assistant Greenkeeper at Woodsome Hall GC, Huddersfield, recently completed 25 years exemplary service with the club. Captain Dr Phillip Shaw, presented him with a watch and a bottle of champagne to mark the occasion.



CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE INVESTMENT

The picturesque Duke's St. Andrews has made a major investment in the quality of its championship course having just completed a major construction project of its tees, bunkers and a renovation programme involving sand-banding and coring the fairways.

Souters Sports Ltd was appointed to construct the new tees and bunkers, with the emphasis on keeping the golf course open during the construction and renovation works. This project was quite unique in that all the construction works were completed during the main playing period of this year, making optimal use of the better weather and ground conditions expected at that time of the year.

Temporary tees were in place for holes if necessary but this was kept to a minimum for the time that the work was carried out and now the course benefits from five separate tee positions at every hole.

The bunkers also went through a complete transformation, being reshaped, drained and

sculptured to make them more aesthetically pleasing, consistent and strategic.

Additional bunkers were also added to some of the fairways and around the new greens, and strategically positioned.

The Duke's is regarded as one of the finest Heathland Championship Courses in the British Isles and a 'must play' course for any golfer. Its style ranks alongside the great inland challenges which demand accuracy and inventive play as well as power golf.



NEW CHAIRMAN AT GOLF CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

The Golf Consultants Association has elected Ian Bulleid as its new chairman.

Ian, a founder member of the GCA, replaces Mike Shields, who has completed a two-year tenure as Chairman and moves on to the GCA committee alongside Andy Hiseman and Mark Smith. Jacqui Baldwin remains as Secretary.

Said Ian: "I am delighted to take over as Chairman. As one of the original founder members I'm really looking forward to developing Mike's legacy and taking the association forwards."

"We have such a lot to offer the industry at a time when it is facing challenges on all sides."

"I need to spearhead the Association to bring us to a wider audience, so that owners and operators everywhere can gain full benefit from the unique array of talent available within the membership."

"I'd like to think that our members will be involved in a number of projects that leave a lasting impression - like our work on the Golf Tourism strategy for Wales".

The GCA was formed in 2001 to offer golf course owners and operators all aspects of golf management consultancy - from initial market research and feasibility studies to marketing, operating a club and even planning the right exit strategy and getting the best possible price.

In recent years the Association members have been active in helping all manner of golf facilities throughout the UK and Europe.

Mike Shields said: "I've had a great two years in the chair, seen the association grow and host two successful GCA Conferences, and I am delighted to be handing over to Ian who, aside from being part of our executive team, has vast industry experience".

"Ian is the ideal Chairman for the GCA: he has wide experience of the golf industry and a proven track record. I believe the Association is in excellent hands for the future."

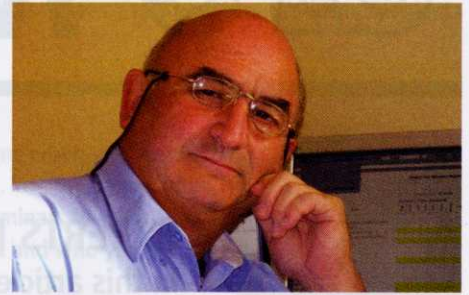
Members of the GCA adhere to strict entrance criteria, which give assurance to any client that the member employed is experienced and up to the task.

Projects undertaken by members for clients include developing golf tourism strategy and major resort property sales, and working closely with individual owner operators advising on agronomy, golf course management, growing golfer usage and improving marketing and staff management.

Added Ian: "We are careful to ensure that any new member can demonstrate long-term commitment and experience in the industry, plus a degree of professionalism and expertise which will ensure that any prospective client can be comfortable with any dealings with one of our members."

If you are interested in GCA membership, potential new members are welcome to email the association at gca@sportsandplay.com.

NEW RECRUIT



Michael Martin, for many years a Senior Partner at York and Martin and more recently York Martin International, has now joined Robin Hume Associates.

The RHA team now comprises of the two most respected elder statesmen in the industry, Robin Hume and Michael Martin, ably supported by Iain Macpherson and Adrian Mortram. This now makes it the largest independent Irrigation Consultancy Practice in Northern Europe, as well as being associate consultants to the STRI.

Adrian Mortram, Director, commented, "Michael is a well known figure on the international fine turf irrigation scene and he will increase our presence in mainland Europe and North Africa, where he has been active for many years. This ensures that we have wide ranging capacity for our expanding business. We also value experience, and in his new role Michael will be working on specific projects. He will be fully involved in the design and specification process, in addition to project management, especially on the larger projects".

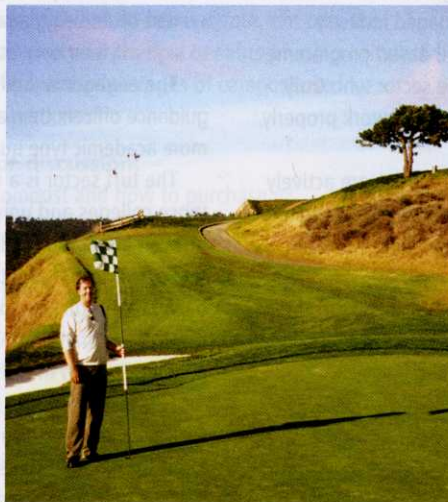
Michael looks forward to being contacted through RHA's Shrewsbury office.

PEBBLE BEACH GC

Frank Scullion, Course Manager at Dunstable Downs GC, visited Pebble Beach, Carmel recently while celebrating his Silver Wedding Anniversary with his wife Sylvia.

Frank contacted Superintendent, Chris Dalhamer before the holiday and asked if he would mind showing them around the Pebble Beach course during their holiday.

"My wife and I spent two and a half hours at the course. They have 30 permanent greenstaff with extra staff coming in during the summer months. I counted 22 handmowers in the sheds! Chris said they were cutting greens at 1/8th during November and the greens were running at around 13 on the stimpmeter. All greens were 100% meadow grass with rye grass on fairways and tees," said Frank.



COLEGRAVE FOUNDATION GRANTS AWARDED

Three students from the Horticulture scheme at Writtle College have each been awarded grants of £500 by the David Colegrave Foundation.

The Foundation wishes to promote student interest in the commercial production of ornamental plants and seeds. The successful students were Richard Demby, Robert Farthing and Mante Bieliauskaitė who will receive the £500 to use towards their course fees.

Richard Demby, 44 from Sierra Leone, is taking a BSc in Horticulture before returning to his job as horticulture technician at his university in Sierra Leone. Robert Farthing, 19 from Uckfield, East Sussex, is a first year BSc (Hons) Horticulture student with a particular interest in crop production. Mante Bieliauskaitė, 22 from Lithuania, is a part-time student on the Foundation Degree in Horticulture and is employed in the nursery stock industry.

SCHOOLCHILDREN TARGETED FOR CAREERS IN GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

The Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG), has started a nationwide campaign to 'sow the seed' among schoolchildren for a career in grounds management by sending an information booklet to every private and public secondary school in the UK.

'Expand Your Knowledge - a Career in Grounds Management' has been especially designed to inform young people about the grounds management profession, starting with an explanation of the role of a grounds manager plus specific sections covering entry routes and opportunities for progression as well as expected rewards, for instance.

Interested youngsters and students are also being invited to take up the IOG's free membership opportunities, and as a consequence will be offered all the information and support required to get their careers off to a flying start.