

SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

By *Melissa Jones*

The Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarship Scheme, run in conjunction with BIGGA, has helped fund many aspiring greenkeepers through their studies, and aided them in fulfilling their ambitions of becoming fully qualified greenkeepers.

"Ransomes Jacobsen has invested over £107,000 to support the Higher Education of BIGGA Members since 2002. This funding has been invaluable in ensuring that greenkeepers are the leaders in the sports turf industry," said Sam Collins, BIGGA's Head of Learning & Development.

We at BIGGA cannot underestimate the importance of this financial support from Ransomes Jacobsen and thank the company for its continued investment in our members," added Sami.

Among those who benefited from the scheme this year was Gary Baxter. Gary has been employed by Mid Yorkshire Golf Club since November 2006 as Deputy Head Greenkeeper and will be using his money to study for an Online Sportsturf Foundation Degree with Myerscough College.

"The scholarship funding has made the degree affordable, it has helped to fund the books that are needed and the annual fees for the course," he said.

"Once the degree has been passed I hope there will be more opportunities in England or Europe to become a Head Greenkeeper," said Gary.

James Hutchinson, Assistant Greenkeeper at Fairhaven Golf Club, in Lytham, has been a BIGGA member for 17 years.

"During this time I have watched BIGGA grow to the professional Association it is today, offering advice and help to all its members," said James.

James started work at Fairhaven from 1988 until 2000 - when he left to become self-employed as a gardener of both landscape and maintenance. He found he did not enjoy this as much and missed greenkeeping, so returned to his post at Fairhaven in 2003 where he has been ever since.

"In 2007 I was given the title of Eco Coordinator and with the help of our greenkeeping team gained the award of Best Newcomer in the BIGGA Golf Environment competition, sponsored by

Ransomes Jacobsen, Scotts and Syngenta - an achievement both myself and Fairhaven are proud of," enthused James.

In August of this year, James was accepted onto the Ransomes scholarship scheme,

"Without this my study may not have been possible and raising finance or funds could have been a problem - thank you BIGGA and Ransomes Jacobsen for making this greenkeeper very happy."

The online Foundation Degree course James will be studying, covers modules such as: plant cell biology ecology conservation, business planning and the management of sports turf machinery - all of which will help him to achieve my personal aim of golf course management. The course will take place at Myerscough College, Preston, through online delivery, which will take three years to complete.

Students who had completed their studies received relevant awards for their hard work and study in late summer, thanks to this BIGGA scheme, superbly supported by Ransomes Jacobsen.

"We are now into our sixth year of sponsorship of BIGGA's Higher Education Scholarship programme and it goes from strength to strength. As a major manufacturer of turf care equipment we have a duty to support our industry sector. Anything

we can do that assists turf care professionals to improve their understanding of fine turf, while at the same time raising their profiles, can only benefit the industry as a whole. This year we have supported seven scholars, so I hope that James, Christopher, Stephen, Kerry, Steven, Gary and Lee have found their studies worthwhile and of benefit to them in their chosen careers," said David Withers, Ransomes Jacobsen's Managing Director.

BIGGA has been able to help its members follow courses of higher education by offering them a scholarship since 2002. Many greenkeepers have been able to attend N/SVQ Level 4, Higher National Certificate, Foundation Degree/HND, BSc Turf Management and MSc Sports Surface Technology courses thanks to continued sponsorship of the Scholarship Scheme by Ransomes Jacobsen.

The amount of the scholarship awarded depends on the course and the funding available. The applications are assessed on the candidate's number of years as a BIGGA member, their contribution to BIGGA and their previous training and development.

Anyone wishing to be considered for a scholarship fund should contact Sami Collins, BIGGA's Head of Learning & Development on: sami@bigga.co.uk



Gary Baxter



James Hutchinson