



Greenkeepers Training Committee



**David Golding, Education Director,
with a monthly update from the GTC**

The GTC has hosted seven workshops throughout England and Scotland, primarily to ensure staff working for the GTC Approved Centres and Colleges in Britain are comfortable with the promotion of the sustainable golf course programme to all greenkeeping students.

The workshops also gave representatives from The R&A the opportunity to explain why the benchmarking service was the online programme for the sector to gather much needed data from golf clubs.

All workshops were held courtesy of golf clubs which have embarked on the sustainable golf course programme and I am sure the clubs will not mind me mentioning their Course Managers as they truly have been and still are at the very heart of the programmes for best practice.

Our thanks also go the management boards, Secretaries and staff at the following clubs:

Wilmslow Golf Club, Cheshire – Course Manager Steve Oultram.
Burnham & Berrow Golf Club, Somerset – Course Manager Richard Whyman.
Glencorse Golf Club, near Edinburgh – Course Manager Ian Bell.
Temple Golf Club, Berkshire – Course Manager Martin Gunn & Deputy Course Manager Glenn Chivers.
Gog Magog Golf Club, near Cambridge – Course Manager Kerran Daly.
King's Hill Golf Club, Kent – Course Manager Duncan Kelso.
Cleveland Golf Club, North Yorkshire – Course Manager Ian Pemberton

The R&A representatives were Paul Seago and Dr Keith Duff (Advisory Members to the Golf Course Committee) and Steve Isaac, Director – Golf Course Management.

Steve, Paul and Keith explained the playing performance, environmental stewardship, economic performance and social responsibility issues facing golf course managers including why the sustainable golf programme should be considered by all golf clubs.

Following presentations by The

R&A representatives and the host Course Manager a course walk provided delegates with a first hand, realistic view on where the club were actually positioned on the sustainable ladder.

The Course Managers all gave excellent presentations and their knowledge, passion and enthusiasm really shone through out on the golf course.....thankyou gentlemen you made my job as the workshop "host" a pleasure.

On returning to the clubhouse the delegates from the GTC Centres and Course Managers discussed all issues outlined in the R&A presentation and whilst it is not possible for me to detail every discussion there were several generic messages which were raised at every workshop.

These will be discussed with The R&A and I know the following points will lead to much discussion among readers.

- A very positive message from all delegates working in the Centres was that at every opportunity from students on N/SVQ Level 2 programmes to HND (Scotland) and Foundation Degree, sustainability will be discussed with all levels of students.

- The sustainable golf course programme is far more than just maintaining golf courses in a manner that encourages the more desirable grasses.

- Water and Pesticide Directives from Europe are already starting to impact on golf and will increasingly become a challenge.

- Course Managers should never embark on implementing a sward exchange programme without first having employer support including the development of a Course Policy Document.

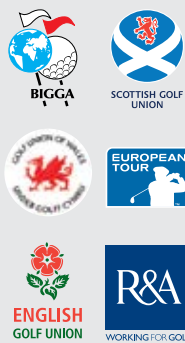
- Ongoing education and communication of the management board and members of what is involved in the sustainable programme is a MUST.

- The major golfing authorities have a significant role to play to educate golf clubs and golfers world wide e.g. The R&A, PGA European Tour, Unions, Federations.

In Brief

David reports on the recent workshops held in association with The R&A to promote the Sustainable Golf Course programme and the Benchmarking Service now available through the website: www.bestcourseforgolf.org

The GTC is funded by:



- Non-golfers whose only experience of the game is watching televised tournaments have a perception that golf is a selfish user of land and a polluter of the environment through excessive use of water, fertiliser and pesticides.

The sustainable golf course programme promotes sound environmental stewardship and attempts to address this perception.

The GTC in association with The R&A has produced learning materials to assist with the promotion of the sustainable golf course programme and these will be made available through the GTC website.

The R&A are entering partnerships with the Home Unions and Federations within Europe to have a national specific Benchmarking Service website information.

These will be accessible through www.bestcourseforgolf.org

When it comes to the rights and wrongs of sward composition there is nothing new in this area of the sustainable golf course programme, which is the essence of basic greenkeeping good practices that have been applied for many years.

However, whilst the GTC and its Approved Centres have and will continue to promote these principles to all greenkeeping students, will the golfer (the customer) be willing to live with the potential reduction in playing surface quality during the implementation of a sustainable golf course programme?

We all have to ensure we understand all aspects of the programme whilst at the same time ensuring Course Managers jobs are sustainable!

With the permission of those involved I will be posting presentations on the GTC website.

Following the very positive feedback from delegates attending the workshops, plans are already underway for further workshops and the GTC will remain at the heart of the promotion of best practices in greenkeeper education in association with its Approved Training Centres.

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