

this apparent relationship was more likely caused by the influence of the management practices and soil type and that the nematode and microbial biomass populations were responding in a similar way to the effects that they had upon the soil environment.

Although you may think 15,000 words is a lot, this is usually a concise version of all that you have found.

Taking on a research project, especially if for the first time can be daunting, but again the support and guidance from the lecturers is brilliant and is there throughout the process. Also you will probably find yourself having to develop new skills just to carry out the project.

My particular challenge was collecting and extracting the nematodes from the soil samples and then identifying the different nematodes by their feeding guilds under a microscope, plus the task of extracting the microbial biomass from the soil samples, along with getting to grips with the 'statistical analysis' of all the results from my investigation.

If anyone is thinking of taking on the challenge of the MSc, then one piece of advice I would give, is to ensure that you are 'PC literate' and I don't just mean how to get on 'Facebook'!

This won't help you understand the subject matter more easily, but it will help with your time management.

There is nothing more frustrating than plodding your way through computer programs when you should be doing it in two or three clicks, believe me I know. Also the nature of the Msc has now changed slightly.

Cranfield are continuing their Sports Surface Technology MSc course as a 'masters by research', which allows particular flexibility for suitably qualified part time students looking to study. Full details are available at <http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/students/courses/page1823.html>

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank Knights Grange sports complex for the use of their facility for my project and Dr Mark Bartlett for his support and guidance throughout the process of my thesis, also my fellow students for helping to make the whole experience an enjoyable one and of course my thanks.

Gratitude go to BIGGA and the Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarship fund who without their financial support my MSc would not have been possible.

Darren Anderson MG

It was August 1992, the look of disappointment on my Parents faces said it all! I had just shown them my GCSE exam results and my Father who back then was also my Course Manager, leant back on his chair at the kitchen table and said. "Well you're lucky to be in a career that you can get a education in, not all kids who have just failed their GCSE's can say that", he then followed on to say "You better stick in when you go to college for your NVQ level 2 or else"! I kept quiet as I had got away very lightly with a telling off!

It was another year before I was sent to college, the reason being, so I had good basic greenkeeping knowledge practically before I went; this was also so I had more interest in the subjects being taught to the class if I had some practical experience in them. Little did I know that this would be the start of a very long education through different stages, even becoming the 46th Master Greenkeeper in 2008 and the look of pride on my parents' faces, I think I had been officially forgiven for the GCSE exam results 16 years earlier.

Throughout my education I have been lucky enough to have a training provider, North Wales Training (NWT) who funded my NVQ levels 2,3,4 with all the extra courses like NPTC training that helps towards NVQ's. In 2001, they also paid for my HNC in Golf Course Management, I told myself this was the final qualification I was going to do, but in 2008 I decided to dust off the computer and study for my Foundation Degree in Science this was On-line and the subject was Sportsturf.

The Club was supportive in me doing another qualification as they knew they would benefit from it too, but they also wanted me to look into funding to help with the costs to keep expenditure down as with most members clubs of late.

With no more funding available from NWT and almost all the avenues of funding exhausted towards the FdSc - Online at Myerscough, it didn't look like I wouldn't get a any financial help, but then I remembered the Ransomes Jacobsen scholarship that I had read about in the GI magazine and on the website, so I enquired about a Scholarship, following on to applying and then being accepted, I presented the club with the information on funding of the on-line course, also informing them that I would not be missing work through



ABOVE: Darren Anderson MG

"I remembered the Ransomes Jacobsen scholarship that I read about in GI and on the website, so I applied and got accepted!"
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day release with it being on-line, the Club happily granted the rest of the expenditure to pay for the remaining sum of money.

The FdSc - Online course at Myerscough was excellent and the staff headed by form tutor Dr Andy Owen were always happy to help.

For anyone thinking of taking up this course, I cannot state enough, it's a great course but you have to be fully committed to it! It is a step up from any other qualifications I have done and I've done a few, you will have to be regimented in allocating yourself revision time, we are all different with our circumstances so how you allocate your time up is up to you, I would suggest approximately eight hours per week, and if you can get some study time off work, take it, sadly for me, I had considerably more work commitments than usual with the run up to Abergel's Centenary and grant work to be carried out after being awarded money from the Ryder Cup Legacy Fund to build Two extra practice facilities, this made it hard to allocate time for study-

ing, so all my study was done in my own time. Originally I told the club that I would not be away for day release because it was online, but I was going to give myself flexy study time, when I could go home for a afternoon when work could spare it, that never really happened and the total time I took off for study over the course was Two days. If I could go back and do it all again I would make sure I allocated time for it.

I always got my work done; it would have just been a lot easier and a lot less stressful if I had allocated time for the course.

The whole course was on-line, in fact the graduation was the first time I had been to Myerscough College and met any of the other students.

Myerscough College On-Line Learning Network (MOLLNET) was excellent; you have your own student page to receive your on-line hand outs, which I must say were to the highest standards! I'm just glad the paper I used to print the handouts was from a Sustainable Source as there was lots of it! At the end of each lecture booklet there was a list of reading material to assist you in your studying, the BIGGA lending library was a great help with the books being aimed at greenkeeping and associated subjects to golf course management, there are nearly all the books needed for revision, but remember there will be other students with the same listing as you.

The exams were also delivered in the same way, with all the information on the subject's timetable, but the Tutors always message everyone in advance just to remind the students.

The exams would become available to print 20 minutes before the start time and they are done under exam conditions according to the information given on the exam sheets, these were posted back to the college the same day with witness statements from the Secretary on the exam procedure.

I've got to where I am today through qualifications, the NVQ's I gained were specific to my job and experience at the time helping me understand greenkeeping and course management practically and academically each stage of the way.

The HNC went back to the class room teaching us subjects compared to gathering evidence and building portfolios for the NVQs

In the HNC my favourite subject was Irrigation Design/Installation and control, this came in handy at the time as the greens at Abergele were being redesigned and recon-

structed to USGA specification, along side the greens construction was the installation of a new computerised valve in head irrigation system. At the time I was the Deputy Head and the club placed me in charge of the project, half way through I was lucky enough to take over as Course Manager

On the second phase of construction the irrigation installation was not going to plan and I noticed that the company installing the system were cutting very large corners, after many site meetings with them and the rest of the project team their contract was terminated and a new company was awarded the contract to finish the installation and to rectify the corners cut, the corner cutting and using poor quality materials would of gone unnoticed if I hadn't studied the Irrigation module in the HNC and the club would have ended up with a poor quality irrigation system.

There are many great subjects in the FdSc and I find them all useful, Increasing my knowledge in disease management/ ecology and conservation etc some subjects I had already studied in my HNC like sports surface construction and Irrigation, but stating that the FdSc is a higher qualification the subjects were delivered in much more depth giving the students more knowledge about the subjects

I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Withers and Ransomes Jacobsen for the funding, I would also like to thank all those involved from BIGGA in the decision to award the Scholarship to me for my FdSc in Sportsturf.

My qualifications have always helped me in my career and in turn helped Abergele G.C in its progression since I have worked there, whether it was being asked my opinion as a assistant, to making decisions as the Course Manager, one thing is for sure, with my latest edition to my portfolio I'm well equipped for the exciting new developments that are in the pipeline for Abergele Golf Club, adding another step in the clubs continues progression as it strides forward into its second century.

I hope my story from being a teenager with no qualifications to where I am today has encouraged not just young Greenkeepers but Greenkeepers of all ages to go to college, the Scholarship is open to all BIGGA members and you wont get it unless you look into it and apply, the scholarship could be the difference for a greenkeeper being granted of refused a college course by their club.

Peter Leach

What a fantastic three years, the most rewarding years of my life so far! After completing NVQ Level 3, I didn't feel ready to make the step up from Deputy to Head Greenkeeper but felt that it was vital to keep my education progressing. I decided that the on-line Foundation Degree SportsTurf provided by Myerscough College was the most suitable route for me personally and this was the best decision I have ever made.

When I started the course my aim was to do my best with the time that I had available. My results at the end of the first year were better than I expected and this gave me the encouragement to work really hard for the final two years. After nearly three years of assignments, deadlines and exams it was such a proud moment for me to attend the Graduation Ceremony at Myerscough College. It has been the biggest achievement of my life to pass with distinction and to be the winner of the BarenbrugTurfAward for 2010. This was presented for having the highest marks out of the on-line Foundation Degree Sports Turf students who graduated this summer from Myerscough College.

I would like to say a huge thank you to Ransomes Jacobsen who supports BIGGA's Higher Education Scholarship. The funding provided from this scholarship enabled me to comfortably meet the costs of the course. Thank you to my employer Exeter Golf and Country Club and John Parr the Course Manager for their flexibility and especially John for his information and advice. Also, I received fantastic help from Exeter's Mechanic, Brian Chidgey, and Robert Guntrip, from Devon Garden Machinery. I was very lucky to have the support and encouragement from my family throughout, thank you for putting up with me and getting me through the stressful times!

The prospect of studying a course on-line may seem daunting and I had reservations at first, however, the on-line delivery provided by Myerscough College is excellent. A bit like an e-mail account, each on-line student has their own page on the College Mollnet. Learning resources are sent each week to your page as well as regular messages from the college tutors. Assignments are delivered to your page and completed assignments can be handed in on the same page in the same way that an e-mail attachment would be sent. It is very user friendly and an E-Learning Team are easy to get hold of via

2010 Scholarships Awarded Winners

Jamie Blake - On Line Foundation Degree - Sports Turf

Craig Parry - SVQ Level 4 - Management

Timothy Johnson - BSc Honours in Turfgrass Science (online)

James Stevens - On Line Foundation Degree - Sports Turf

Gary Cunningham - NVQ Level 4 Sports Turf

Andrew Reason - HNC Golf Course Management (Online)

Derek Robson - Online Certificate in Turfgrass Management

Michael Boyes - On Line Foundation Degree - Sports Turf

Graeme Latto - SVQ Level 4 in Management

Greg Wellings - MSc By Research