



Greenkeepers Training Committee



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

I trust by now the big freeze is over however during January I can honestly say Aldwick Manor's greens looked as good as any in the world!

Covered in snow for weeks and weeks it reminded me of my apprenticeship days at Buxton & High Peak Golf Club where during the then regular annual New Year dump of snow I gained life skills totally unrelated to greenkeeping.

By January/February we had painted the golf course "furniture", in some cases more than once and the machinery had all been stripped down and serviced mainly in house but with some outside assistance e.g. the gang mower cylinders off for a re-grind....but what next?

I was fortunate as an apprentice as I was trained by not only an excellent greenkeeper but also a very multi-skilled man in Ray Norton. Ray sadly died a young man but his skills and knowledge very much live on through his son, Steve, who is the Head Greenkeeper at High Peak and I think he was typical of many traditional Head men of the '50s and '60s in that they could turn their hands to anything and I mean anything.

I am sure this is the case today at the majority of golf clubs. If there is a crisis or a job that wants doing "yesterday" who do they call? The greenkeeper (not Ghostbusters!)

The GTC endeavours to ensure the greenkeeping qualifications and courses include all the skills and knowledge to provide employers with multi-skilled employees who can maintain and manage the golf course but it is the added value of greenkeepers that we often cannot include in the qualifications or apprenticeship scheme.

How random would "Apply undercoat paint to surface" look in a greenkeeping qualification?

Unless I have missed something in the last 40 or so

years in the industry, today's greenkeepers are very practical men and women who can turn their hands to most jobs!

These skills are often passed on by the Course Managers and often never factored into the overall benefit to the business by the employer.

A talented multi-skilled Course Manager is arguably the golf clubs greatest asset and passing on the skills and knowledge throughout the staff is just part of the day-to-day responsibilities and an enthusiastic greenkeeping apprentice could learn so much from the "boss".

I hate to hear of greenkeepers being "laid off" especially during the winter and I can only say in Buxton we did operate with a minimum number of full time staff all the year round and a part timer in summer, but we kept busy.

Ray taught me not only everything I needed to know about machinery servicing and preparing for the advent of spring but new skills like plumbing, decorating all of which I experienced in the clubhouse.

I am sure this still happens and whilst we have no plans to add Units from other qualifications into greenkeeping qualifications I hope you appreciate the point I am making?

Golf club employers, I am sure, appreciate the range of skills brought to the business by the greenkeepers and I hope the practical multi-skilled professionalism in greenkeeping is acknowledged and rewarded.

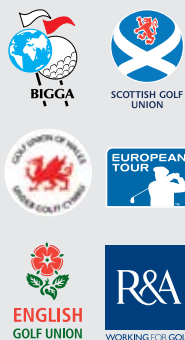
Although the GTC and its Approved Centres desperately try to keep up with the changing funding priorities of the Governments funding agencies, very often by the time I can give you today's priority group for funding, the goal posts have moved.

However for some time now, the 16-19 age group of apprentices have their programmes funded and then it is up to the various

In Brief

This month David remembers his time as an apprentice greenkeeper and how, in the depths of a big freeze not only did he retain full employment but gained new skills, which have proved priceless. David also lends his support to the current apprenticeship framework and encourages employers through their Course Managers to keep signing on apprentices.

The GTC is funded by:



Centres to try and negotiate with the funding agency to contract for 19+ apprentices.

I apologise for not being more specific regarding funding but I encourage employers and Course Managers to contact their chosen Centre/Training Provider and look to interview an apprentice and explain the training programme which is based on the vocational qualifications Levels 2 and 3.

The apprenticeship framework also includes additional skills designed to ensure the apprentice has all the communication skills including numeracy and literacy.

In summary an apprenticeship not only suits the majority of employers looking to recruit new staff but Course Managers can train them on the job using the national standards of the vocational qualifications and support from the chosen centre, oh, and not forgetting the additional skills that will stand the apprentice in good stead for the rest of his/her life.

Back to the decorating...

For further information on the apprenticeship framework visit the GTC website:

www.the-gtc.co.uk

David has recently received some good news for Scottish golf club employers from Lantra. Employers in the land-based industries including golf courses now have the opportunity to receive £1,000 to encourage them to invest in a new apprentice.

The GTC with the Lantra, Sector Skills Council are making business aware of the funding available that is open to apprentices of all ages. Visit the following link for more information:

www.lantra.co.uk/funding

Contact Details

David Golding
GTC Education Director

01347 838640
david@the-gtc.co.uk

GTC
Aldwick Manor
Near York
YO61 1UF

www.the-gtc.co.uk