

Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director, updates us on his work with the European Greenkeeping Education Unit (EGEU)...



As we celebrated 25 years of BIGGA during the recent Harrogate Week, it was very rewarding to see how far the greenkeeping sector of golf has progressed since those days when there was no professional body, only volunteers and Honorary Secretaries running the three former greenkeeping Associations, BGGA, EIGGA and SIGGA.

I hesitate to go even further back into the history of greenkeeping, as I felt old during Harrogate, when those involved in the pre-BIGGA days kept reminding me of days and events past!

Volunteers are still very much at the heart of any successful Association but I know from my experience, the day to day dedicated professional administrators, coupled with the efforts of the volunteers, make a brilliant cocktail for success.

Without the many volunteers who willingly support the GTC I know my job and that of Fiona's would be much more difficult.

It is not only the volunteers on the GTC Board but those individuals, who are on the three GTC Advisory Panels that help us to maintain greenkeeping National Occupational Standards, monitor the Delivery of Programmes and assist with Marketing the GTC's "products".

Too many to mention individually, however a full list of current volunteers can be viewed on the GTC website but a personal thanks to all of you.

It is through the collective work of all who are associated with the GTC, that John Holliday, GTC Finance Director, and I were invited to join the Board of the European Greenkeeping Education Unit (EGEU).

This relatively new organisation has been established through a Special Project funded initially by the European Golf Association (EGA), the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association (FEGGA) and The R&A.

A working group has established

a set of occupational standards and I am pleased that both the EGA and member Associations of the Federation of Golf Greenkeeping Associations (FEGGA) have adopted the three levels of standards, which will be maintained by an Advisory Group administered by myself and approved through the EGEU Board.

The key to the success of this Special Project will be the advice and support the EGEU and its advisors can give to golf developing countries where there is little or no structure for greenkeeper education, training or qualifications.

The EGEU, now fully financially supported through a short-term special project by The R&A, has already played an important advisory role for several countries looking to establish their own structure and system of greenkeeper training.

Without looking to impose the British model of establishing an employer led GTC on other countries, our advice would always be to involve the Golf Union or Federation in a country together with the Greenkeeping Association, if there is one.

The establishment of a Centre or Centres similar to the structure we have maintained in Britain is also advised but at all times, quality of the delivery has to be paramount.

Whilst in Britain to date we have worked closely with colleges and one private company to deliver the formal qualifications, other countries, especially those new to golf who have no college or Institute to deliver greenkeeper education, are considering a golf club as a Centre for education and training.

It is really what "best suits" each country and it really comes back to having Standards and access to quality education and support documentation.

The GTC Board has approved the use of GTC products such as the Training Manual and Learning Materials being translated, under a strict licence and copyright agreement, but again this was following a formal request from a golf developing country.



The GTC is funded by:



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A spin off from the initial request was that the country is also looking to register their trainees for a British qualification!

That request is a clear indication to me that the British formal qualifications for greenkeeping have great respect and credibility throughout the world.

We are also aware that several of the GTC's Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers are already involved outside of Britain and there is no doubt there will be further opportunities to export their expertise, training programmes and products over the coming weeks, months and years through the GTC and EGEU.

It is the experience of the GTC and its advisor network that is acknowledged through the project and we hope that the EGEU over the next few years, becomes recognised and established to promote best practice in all matters greenkeeping throughout Europe.

Visit the EGEU website www.egeu.eu to see how Standards and Advice are the focal points of the organisation

