

# Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director, with a monthly update



This month David looks at why and how British educated and trained greenkeepers are still very much in demand worldwide and how international students are still looking to attend British colleges. Plus, how the GTC is now helping golf developing countries

**It gives me great pleasure when I receive an email from a familiar name reminding me that they were a British apprentice and are now working abroad as Course Manager or Director of Golf.**

It is very rewarding to see how the British greenkeeping education and training system has been the foundation for many, to not only progress to be Course Managers throughout Britain, but ply their trade overseas and enjoy the experience.

There are also many of today's non-British Course Managers who have travelled from far and wide to gain knowledge from a British college and who have also enjoyed the experience of gaining skills from working on a British golf course.

The same can be said of young greenkeepers who have travelled abroad to gain new life experiences. I've lost count of how many greenkeepers have enjoyed the Ohio State University programme managed so expertly my 'old' friend Mr Mike O'Keefe, since the initiative started back in 1989! Mike only recently informed me that American Superintendents love the young British greenkeepers who have completed Level 2, as they are "so multi-skilled when they arrive in the States". A true testament to the British structure of greenkeeper training and one many people have worked on to develop and continue to maintain.

This is just one example of how sharing knowledge and experiences throughout the world of greenkeeping has benefited so many who choose greenkeeping as a career.

Turf college lecturers are now working closer than ever with Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to develop apprentices to

become the future custodians of golf courses. Course Managers, Deputies and in fact all levels of greenkeepers have more access to knowledge and qualifications, as online learning becomes so much more accessible. A Degree in Sports Turf Surfaces is no longer just a dream for many greenkeepers, it a reality. The internet has obviously helped and communication across the world of greenkeeping appears to be going from strength to strength.

Having mentioned the formal qualifications, it must not be forgotten that the two key elements - knowledge and experience - are the very foundation which underpin any education structure.

Through my involvement in advising an increasing number of countries within my role as Standards Director to the European Greenkeeping Education Unit (or as it will soon become, Greenkeeper Training Europe), it is apparent that with very few exceptions, many countries as yet have no formal greenkeeper education system.

Some countries do not have a greenkeeping association, however, the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association (FEGGA) supports those established Greenkeeping Associations in Europe and is also helping countries where golf is developing to start an association.

BIGGA, as a founder member of FEGGA, also plays an important role, with former BIGGA Chairman Paul Worster, now a FEGGA Director, offering to assist the younger Greenkeeping Associations.

It is apparent in many countries that Greenkeeping Associations have little or no support from their Golf Federation or Union to promote greenkeeper education. This is

something that the European Golf Association (EGA) are currently looking to address and Richard Heath, the General Secretary to the EGA and the EGA Board, is looking at how best they can support their affiliates.

Thankfully there is no such problem in Britain with The GTC established as the organisation where BIGGA and the British Home Unions meet to discuss all aspects of greenkeeper education, training

**“Turf college lecturers are now working closer than ever with Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to develop apprentices to become the future custodians of golf courses”**



The GTC is funded by:



and qualifications. It is a success story and one we are sharing as a blueprint with other countries.

Ultimately, it is the golf club employer who benefits most from having well trained staff and to have the major employer bodies around the table with the professional body for greenkeepers certainly has great benefits for British golf clubs and greenkeepers alike.

The Government still looks to employers to take the lead on establishing Occupational Standards for their particular sector.

What follows are funding incentives such as apprenticeship allowances which in Britain have benefited many employers and greenkeepers over the years.

In summary, British trained and educated greenkeepers are operating in many countries and the sharing of best practices amongst golf organisations, associations, education establishments and companies within the sector must bode well for the future standards of golf course maintenance and management.

For all the latest information on greenkeeper education, training courses visit the GTC's website [www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk)

## Contact Details

David Golding  
GTC Education Director  
and European Greenkeeping  
Education Unit Standards  
Director

01347 838640  
[david@the-gtc.co.uk](mailto:david@the-gtc.co.uk)

GTC  
Aldwark Manor  
Near York  
YO61 1UF

[www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk)  
[www.egeu.eu](http://www.egeu.eu)  
[www.greenkeepertraining.com](http://www.greenkeepertraining.com)



You can follow the GTC on  
Twitter @TheOfficialGTC