

WELCOME FROM BIGGA

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FTMI Delegates and mentors 2014

Back to the future (part 2)

Last month I was privileged to attend the 2nd Future Turf Managers Initiative, made possible by Jacobsen, at which 20 BIGGA members descended on Jacobsen's Ipswich headquarters for three days of intensive education, mentoring and networking.

The purpose of the event is to give the delegates the additional non-agronomic skills and knowledge that they need to progress to greater achievements and substantial career development. The delegates, one of whom – Joe Buckley from Queenwood – has contributed an excellent technical article this month (pages 28-30) lapped up the education on offer and will use the experience, the knowledge gained and the contacts made to full effect in their greenkeeping career. We are hugely indebted to Jacobsen for their generous support of this superb Initiative.

At the opening dinner the internationally renowned turfgrass scientist, Dr Frank Rossi from Cornell University, spoke on 'The Future of the Industry'. His key message to the ambitious young greenkeepers present was succinct – 'you guys are in the service industry, and if you can't accept that, then it's time for a change of career!'

It was fascinating to hear such a bold statement from someone who has spent their whole life in the agronomic side of this business. It really brought home to me that, now more than ever, greenkeepers need to play their part in delivering the experience that golfers want and expect. With news arriving that, due to adult participation targets not being met, Sport England is reducing its financial support of golf development, it is fair to say our sport is in a battle – against other sports, hobbies and the increasing pressure on people's time and money.

It is crucial that everyone involved in delivering the golfer's customer experience plays their part. Attention to detail, a focus on

presenting the appropriate level of challenge and a sunny disposition all have a role to play but will also serve to make the greenkeeping team far more secure in their positions at a time when many golf clubs are looking to cut costs. I believe many greenkeepers are in a position to take the lead within their clubs and help ensure that golfers enjoy their time on the course and choose to hurry back.

In this month's magazine we carry news of two exciting developments for the Continue to Learn programme at BTME 2015. We are delighted that Everris has agreed to support an education voucher scheme for Continue to Learn as part of their iTurf Rewards scheme.

Feedback suggests this will be a hugely popular opportunity to earn substantial contributions towards taking part next year. Additionally we are introducing a new process for determining a sizable proportion of the educational content at BTME 2015. The 'Proposal to Present' scheme will ensure that we cast the net as widely as possible in terms of presenters and content and will put you the member firmly in position to choose which are relevant to you and your facility.



Enjoy the read.

Jim Croxton, Chief Executive