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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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The advertising copy deadline for inclusion in the January 2005 edition of Greenkeeper International is Friday 10 December 2004

Greenkeeper International:

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Circulation is by subscription. Subscription rate: UK £42 per year, Europe and Eire £55. The magazine is also distributed to BIGGA members, golf clubs, local authorities, the turf industry, libraries and central government.

ISSN: 0961-6977

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Welcome

END OF A TUMULTUOUS YEAR

As 2004 draws to a close it is perhaps fitting to look back at a year which by any standards has been a tumultuous one for the Association.

It began with the failing health and then untimely passing of the Association's first Executive Director, Neil Thomas. Neil had been at the helm since 1987 and had overseen the Association's development from fledgling body to a highly regarded organisation within the golf world.

His funeral, on a snowy day last February, saw mourners come from all corners of the country and as far afield as the United States and Sweden, a real measure of the respect in which Neil was held and the stature BIGGA has now attained.

That the Association kept on course and even continued to develop during Neil's illness, and in the time since his death, says much for the quality of the team at BIGGA HOUSE and, in particular, John Pemberton, who carried the brunt of the additional responsibility while Neil was on sick leave, and who was subsequently appointed Chief Executive on a permanent basis.

John has put his own stamp on the Association since taking on the top job. He has ensured that he has got himself out and about as much as possible to meet members and listen to their wishes and concerns. It is an approach and formula he has extended to the trade and other bodies within the game of golf and it would be fair to say that John has been rewarded for his time spent on Britain's motorway network, and indeed beyond these shores, with BIGGA's profile at an all time high.

That can only be good news and with John's work being replicated by others at headquarters you can be assured no stone is being left unturned in ensuring that BIGGA's voice, and that of the greenkeeping profession, is being heard and, more importantly, listened to.

With Neil's passing at the beginning of the year it is sad to report another loss at the end. Roland Taylor, who has written for Greenkeeper International for over eight years, died suddenly after a short illness last month.

Indeed the final article he wrote appeared as recently as November's magazine and he had several others in the pipeline and due to appear over the next seven or eight months.

Roland was a thoroughly decent man, well respected within the industry, and a very dependable and conscientious writer. The thoughts of everyone at BIGGA go out to his partner, Hilary, and his family.

For the Thomas and Taylor families this Christmas will be a particularly difficult time – happiness and joy in so many homes but sadness and an emptiness in their own.

Hopefully this Christmas most of the rest of us will be in the fortunate position of experiencing happiness and joy and that we can all use the time to relax, unwind and prepare for what I'd like to think might be a less tumultuous 2005.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

Management, make it your own

BUGGY BAN Baffles CLUBS

Confusion is rife about new rules affecting buggy and trolley bans on golf courses, says the National Golf Clubs' Advisory Association (NGCAA).

The Disability Discrimination Act means golf clubs must remove any physical barriers preventing a disabled person from using a course. Failing to do this will make the club liable for damages for unlawful discrimination which could run into thousands.

However, Michael Shaw, National Secretary of the NGCAA, says many clubs are confused about how the Act affects buggy and trolley bans that already exist.

"We've had a surge of queries from clubs

concerned about the legality of buggy and trolley bans on their courses. There is definitely confusion. What is clear is that courts no longer approve a blanket ban.

"However, clubs are entitled to impose a ban which restricts access to those parts of the course it is necessary to preserve.

"They must also implement a ban if the health and safety of any individual is at risk due to weather and ground conditions.

"It is vital that clubs are able to justify any ban they impose and they must have documentation in place to explain the reasons behind it," added Shaw.



ROBSON OPENS RANSOMES JACOBSEN OFFICE

One of Ransomes Jacobsen's biggest and longest standing fans opened the new office block on their existing Ipswich site last month.

Sir Bobby Robson, who has managed Ipswich Town, England and Newcastle United among many others, had retained a house in Ipswich for 34 years until recently.

He told the assembled guests that he had inherited a Ransomes cylinder mower when he bought the house and had passed the same mower on to the new owners when he left earlier this year.

"I was once at the Sydney Cricket Ground and saw a groundsman cutting the square with a Ransomes machine so I just had to go up and tell him that I came from the same town as where his

machine had been made," said Sir Bobby, who, for all his obvious knowledge of the company, was making his first visit.

"I'd never been to the factory before but the whole football club knew where it was because so many of the Ransomes workers were Ipswich Town season ticket holders. In fact I used to joke that a great midfield would have been Ransomes, Simms and Jeffries," said Sir Bobby.

Recently appointed Ransomes Jacobsen Managing Director, David Withers, had earlier accompanied Sir Bobby around the plant introducing him to many of the staff while invited guests were given a guided tour of Ipswich Town's ground, Portman Road.



DEREK'S NEW ROLE IN DUNDEE

Derek Hoskins, of the Scottish Central Section, has been promoted to Parks Duty Officer with Dundee City Council.

Derek has been on duty for the Council for 24 years, as an apprentice, assistant and Head Greenkeeper on the Camperdown Golf Course, one of two courses Dundee City Council own.

Derek's new role will see him swap

his steal toecaps and thermals for the less unfamiliar shirt and tie combination, as he oversees the greenkeeping team at the second Council course, Caird Park. In an ironic twist, Derek actually started his greenkeeping career at Caird Park, seeing out the first two years of his apprenticeship, before moving to Camperdown.



Stephen (centre) receives the Diamond Jug from sponsor Alex Cruickshank (left), of Daval, and Ayrshire chairman Martin Lothian from Turnberry.

STEPHEN'S LOCH LOMOND TRIUMPH

Stephen Higgins, of Ardeer Golf Club, became Ayrshire champion and the third winner of the Diamond Jug at the Dundonald Links of Loch Lomond Golf Club recently. He matched the 35pts scored at Prestwick St Nicholas in the spring to win.

Ayrshire enjoyed a fabulous day in the autumn sunshine on the new Dundonald course, which was under refurbishment but in splendid order, especially the greens, which were awesome. For this and the excellent hospitality shown to the Ayrshire members on the day a special thanks to Course Superintendent, Ken Stems, and all of the staff for a truly fantastic day for the Ayrshire Section.

FUNDING FOR SPORTS SURFACE TECHNOLOGY MSC

The need for a scientific approach to maintaining and constructing natural and artificial sports surfaces has never been greater.

To cope with this, a new breed of sports surface manager is needed, someone with outstanding scientific and technical skills.

Cranfield University is offering employers in the sports arena 'match-for-match funding' to encourage them to give their grounds managers the opportunity to attend the well-established Sports Surface Technology MSc degree course on a part-time basis.

Course Director Alex Vickers said, "The Sports Surface MSc is the only one of its kind in Europe, and attracts students from all kinds of sports surface backgrounds.

"Recent research has highlighted the need for us to encourage employers to

invest in their staff and, therefore, the future of their facilities. We hope this initiative will break down some of the barriers faced by grounds staff and Course Managers when trying to get sponsorship from their employers."

He continued, "The course certainly benefits employers; not only will their managers gain new practical and technical skills but all students undertake an extensive research project at their place of work as part of the degree."

The 'match-for-match' funding means employers do not have to pay half the fee for the first year – a saving of £1000.

It is also envisaged that employers will be offered a half-day workshop giving them the opportunity to find out more about the work being undertaken by the students and the Cranfield Centre for Sports Surfaces.

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES'

Jane Jones has been appointed as BIGGA's new Regional Administrator for the South West and South Wales Region.

Jane officially started her new role on November 1 and has already been busy visiting numerous clubs, meeting many members and aiding in the organisation of the final stages of the Cannington Conference held on November 17.

"My feet haven't touched the ground since I started, I have been setting up my office, while organising various events and meeting lots of the guys," said Jane.

"This job appealed to me as I have been part of the golfing world for so long and really enjoy everything about it and the people in it. I love meeting new people, organising events, helping people and using my knowable in my work.

"In my role as a Regional Administrator I feel I can really do this, while also being a crucial link between the members and BIGGA HQ and playing my part in moving the whole Association forward."

Jane joins BIGGA after 12 years as an Assistant Manager at Thornbury Golf Centre, which is based just outside Bristol. Previous to this she had worked in the hotel conference business, before her love for golf moved her into the game for good.

A keen golfer, Jane is a member of both Thornbury and The Bristol Golf Club, where she has filled the post of Social Secretary.



It's a hard life for Mark.

NO RAIN IN SPAIN FOR MARK

Moving house and changing jobs can be a difficult and often unsettling time for most people, but when it involves moving countries and cultures also, it makes it that much more daunting.

However we are pleased to report that Mark Ellis, formerly of the Mid Anglia Section, is thoroughly enjoying his new life out in Spain.

Mark left Stocks Golf Club in July to move to the Costa Blanca, where his wife, Angela, works on a local ex-pat newspaper, The Coast Rider.

"When I saw Mark he was enjoying the easy life sunbathing, eating out and drinking. I had a tour of his local area including his local bar, new house, pool and beaches," said Clive Parnell, of Gem Professional, who recently visited Mark.

The pictures we received clearly back up this statement.

SCARCROFT HEAD GREENKEEPER DIES AT 35

It is Greenkeeper International's sad duty to report that Telford Jarvis, of Scarcroft Golf Club, passed away on November 14 2004 after a short illness.

Telford was a highly thought of individual by all that knew him, a man that took great pride in all of his work.

This was clearly appreciated by the membership of Scarcroft GC itself, as over 50 members from the club attend his funeral. In all over 200 people attended the funeral, consisting of friends, golfers, BIGGA representatives and many greenkeepers from across the country.

Telford was born in Castleford, West Yorkshire, on February 21 1969 and started his career in greenkeeper at Normanton Golf Club, after dabbling in bricklaying.

He enjoyed the job he was doing and he put a lot of effort into gaining his qualifications at Askham Bryan College on block release where he met a lot of his friends from within the

industry. He worked at Roundhey Park Golf Club and Low Laithes GC before moving to Scarcroft Golf Club in 1988.

While there he worked hard to rise through the ranks to become Head Greenkeeper in 1998. He was a very conscientious worker who always gave 110% and transformed the course into the excellent place it is today. Telford was also a keen and excellent golfer, winning, among other things, the BIGGA & Iseki Championship Final in 1991.

Telford was married to Lisa, since 1999, and they shared a beautiful and happy life together, with the icing on the cake being the arrival, on October 25 2002, of their son, Roman.

"The void left in the world can never be filled, Telford was loved and admired by many. My heart is with Lisa, their son Roman and his parents and family," said close friend David Mulholland, Course Manager, Pontefract and District Golf Club.



Telford as seen on the Front cover of GI 1991.

GCSAA INCENTIVES FOR FIRST TIME EXHIBITORS AT SHOW

GCSAA have announced their excellent incentive packages for first time exhibitors at the Golf Industry Show in February 2005.

The A.E.A. together with UK Trade & Investment have been supporting the GCSAA show for a number of years and the GCSAA are keen to encourage new overseas exhibitors to the event and are offering an excellent incentive package to UK companies.

These benefits include: Golf Industry Show exhibitor space subsidy; Pre/post event marketing and advertising discount; VIP reception invitation; Tickets to GCSAA President's celebration; Distributor registration list; Private meetings room; Solutions challenge location.

They are also offering complimentary registration to future exhibitors and will schedule a tour of the Show to learn more about the event.

A.E.A. and UKTI will also have a catalogue stand at the Show, so company literature from UK companies is urgently required.

Full details of this package and the catalogue stand are available from Debbie Dale at the A.E.A.

Tel: 01733 362925 or email export@aea.uk.com.

GOLFJOBS WEBSITE ARRIVES IN THE UK

The launch of www.golfjobs.co.uk has been announced following the successful introduction of the 100% dedicated golf recruitment website, www.golfjobs.ie, in the Irish market.

Spearheaded by Ryder Cup legend, Christy O'Connor Junior, the website is a central point for golf clubs to pool their marketing power and creates an easier way for candidates to find golf related positions from Greenkeepers to Golf Professionals and Club Managers.

The developers of golfjobs.co.uk are keen to ensure that the website is seen as not just a jobs board, but a site that offers recruitment advice on CV preparation and interview skills.

There will also be a golf news feed from BBC sport, as well as general information on careers in the golf sector.



FAIRWAYS' SCOTSTURF SUCCESS

Fairways GM, Ransomes Jacobsen's new dealer with a territory encompassing most of Scotland, experienced a very successful Scotsturf in November.

Coming just two days after they began trading as a Ransomes Jacobsen dealer, Scotsturf provided the perfect launch for the Fairways team.

Managing Director David Rae said, "We were elated with the response from visitors to our stand. With the support of the manufacturer we had the biggest stand at the show and we were busy throughout. This was the perfect opportunity for us to introduce the company to Scottish turf professionals and the whole event was a great success."

"The stand was superb and certainly made a statement. We had the opportunity to talk to many loyal Ransomes Jacobsen customers and possible future clients and were able to demonstrate that we're here for the long term. All in all, a great start for the company."

BOWCOM GETS NEW OWNER

Bowcom, the supplier of complete linemarking solutions, safety products and setting out equipment, has been acquired by the Cardiff-based Fiddes Group, which has led to significant investment in research and development and a number of major innovations to the Bowcom brand.

The acquisition and substantial financial investment has provided Bowcom with a platform from which an extensive programme of reorganisation and expansion has recently been undertaken.

This includes a dedicated new laboratory and production facilities at the company's new headquarters in Cardiff and the creation of a number of new jobs in product development and technical support.

The new direction the company is taking involves an exciting release of products into the Pitch and Ground Care markets.

GREEN FINGERED GURU APPOINTED

Paul McClearn, has been appointed as Head Greenkeeper at the brand new, £50 million, The Carrick on Loch Lomond; De Vere Resort Ownership Limited's 5-star international golf and leisure resort.

Paul will preside over the stunning fairways of the championship level, all-season, traditional heathland style course working with Estates Manager, Alec Glachan, taking responsibility for both grounds staff and machinery.



Commenting on his appointment, Paul said, "The opportunity to take responsibility for the fairways of a course of this calibre is very rare.

The Carrick design and location is spectacular and I do not underestimate the challenge of keeping

Doug Carrick's course at championship level standards all year round.

"It will be a stunning course to play and I am delighted that it will be pay and play, giving people of all levels the chance to walk the fairways of a magnificent course," he continued.

Born and educated in Galway, Ireland, Paul moved to Helensburgh eight years ago where he was employed at the exclusive Loch Lomond Golf Club as Assistant Superintendent.

Before this he worked at the Jack Nicklaus designed parkland course, Mount Juliet Golf Club, which hosted the 2004 AMEX World Tour.

Craig Mitchell, MD of DVROL, said, "Paul's enthusiasm and experience will make him a valuable member of the estates team."

NEW DEPOT MANAGER FOR ROLAWN



Rolawn have appointed a new depot manager for their Botley Southampton depot.

Simon Chandler has been promoted as Rolawn Depot Manager Southampton. Simon, 30, joined Rolawn as Assistant Manager at the Sunningdale depot four years ago.

He took up his new post at the depot located at the Hillier Garden Centre, Botley on October 1. Prior to Simon joining Rolawn, his previous experience included work within the retail distribution sector.



MINE'S A DOUBLE

For the second year running Edward Stant and his partner, Paul Woodham, reached the Scotts Doubles Final, held on the West Course of the Wentworth Club.

After travelling down with the Midlands Scotts Area Sales Manager, Mark Rayner, on Saturday October 9, the lucky finalists were treated to a full English breakfast in the outrageous splendid of the Wentworth clubhouse, upon which they received their 'goody bags' consisting of tees, pitch fork repairer, course planner, etc.

The course was, as the previous year, in fantastic condition. Every inch was in pristine

The finalists, E.Stant, P.Woodham, T.Cheese and P.Nixon.

condition and, after a rocky start, Paul and Edward managed to squeeze out their extremely friendly opponents, for a memorable victory.

The entire day was courtesy of Mark Rayner and Scotts, not forgetting to mention Chris Kennedy from Wentworth, who arranged the tee time and breakfast.

"I would like to thank all concerned, especially Scotts, for one of the most fantastic days involving golf you could ever ask to have," said the victorious Edward, who is the Midland Section Chairman.



BUILDING FOR GROWTH

GGM, a grounds care machinery and parts suppliers, have announce the significant expansion of their grounds care business following the successful purchase of additional and larger premises next door to their existing facility on the Whitewalls Industrial Estate, in Colne, Lancashire.

The new building, which will be used from January 2005, will feature an impressive product display area and an all new state-of-the-art workshop facility, which is double the size of the current building.

The development represents a significant financial investment by GGM and will result in the recruitment of up to five people, across all parts of the company.

The decision to purchase the property follows recent impressive growth, a part of which results from the recently developed e-commerce website where customers can buy new and used equipment and spares online, but also reflects expected demand for grounds care equipment in the future.

Chris Gibson, GGM Managing Director explains, "This move is part of our overall strategic business plan to develop our business in a way that meets the increasing needs of our customers."

IRRIPLAN'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY SUCCESS

Independent irrigation consultancy IrriPlan has celebrated its 10th anniversary during 2004 - a year that has proved to be the most successful in its history.

Originally formed by Giles Wardle as Wardle Associates in 1994, the company became Wardle Consulting Engineers in 1997 and changed its name to IrriPlan in 2003.

IrriPlan welcomed Phil Langdon back to the company in 2003 as Projects Director for Scotland and Ireland. This year he's been instrumental to the company's growth and success.

"It's been a very busy year for us and we've been privileged to work on some fantastic projects", said Giles.

Tip of the Month

This month by John Quinn MG,
Managing Director, Greenmaster Ltd.



BIGGA's Master Greenkeeper John Quinn MG provides his tip to help you in your course management.

Salty solution to weeds...

Here is my simple tip for eradicating dandelions and other turf weeds that you can find on the golf course.

Dandelions and other rosette type turf weeds tumble to a simple dose of table salt applied to the centre of the weed.

This kills off the weed and causes absolutely no damage to turfgrass. This mixture also means that there is no need for a herbicide application.



MF Petrol Ride-on Mowers

When you buy an Massey Ferguson petrol ride-on mower, you not only get a machine designed to meet the requirements of the most demanding customer but also the back-up of our world-renowned dealer network.

There are seven models available, ranging from 6.5 to 22 hp. All are driven by well-proven Briggs and Stratton petrol engines with a choice of manual or hydrostatic transmissions. With floating decks and simple, speedy cutting height adjustment via a lever next to the driver, they incorporate the latest technology-enhancing performance and productivity yet remain easy to operate. Combine these features with our service and parts back-up that's second to none and you'll have a machine that's definitely a cut above the competition.

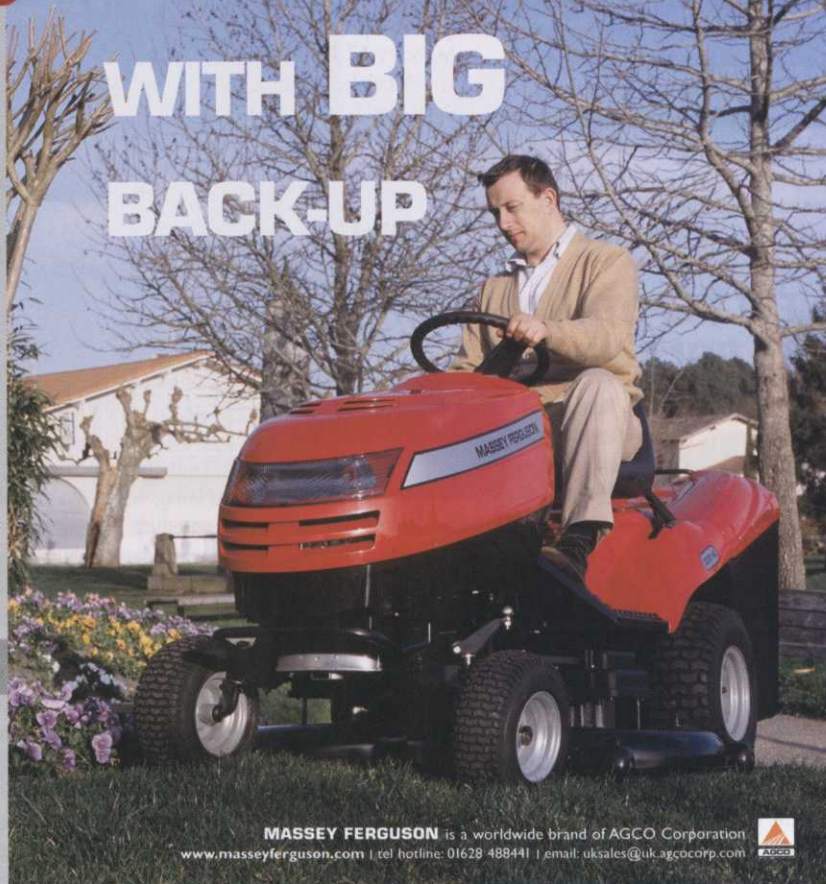
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Education Update

Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager, wonders where the time has gone as the Education Department gear up for an exciting 2005.

It seems to be true that time flies ever faster, the older you get, as it does not seem very long since Christmas 2004 and we are only three weeks away from Christmas 2005.

More importantly, that means that we are only six weeks away from Continue to Learn 2005 with BITMC rapidly moving over the horizon.

Continue to Learn 2005

Bookings for Continue to Learn 2005 are still arriving in large numbers and the five Workshops, sponsored by the John Deere Team Championship, are filling up.

There are still a few places left but you need to get your application in as soon as possible if you wish to attend.

The two-day Workshops are: Sunday 16 and Monday 17 January

Grass Roots Level

Presented by Dennis and Adrian Mortram

Effective Communication and Negotiation

Presented by David Bancroft-Turner

Golf Course Design

Presented by Jonathan Tucker and David Hemstock.

The one-day Workshops are: Monday 17 January

The Principles of Irrigation

Presented by representatives from BTLIA

Course Preparation Techniques

Presented by Jon Scott and Richard Stillwell

All Workshops will be held in the Majestic Hotel and cost £65 for members attending a one-day Workshop and £130 for members attending two days.

These prices include lunch on each day but do not include accommodation.

Seminar Programme

The much extended Seminar Programme begins on Monday 17 January when the Association of Golf Club Secretaries will be holding a full day of seminars aimed at golf club secretaries and golf club officials.

For information on these seminars, please contact the AGCS on 01934 641166.

Tuesday 18 January sees the start of the Continue to Learn Seminars, followed by ClubHouse seminars in the afternoon.

Wednesday 19 January begins with the Presentation of Awards to three new Master Greenkeepers and to the winners of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition 2004, sponsored by WRAP, Scotts UK and Syngenta.

The main presentation of 2005 is to our President,

Sir Michael Bonallack, who will receive the BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Award.

The presentations will be followed by the 2005 Keynote Speaker, Lesley Everett.

Lesley is the UK's leading speaker on personal branding and should give us all food for thought on how we see ourselves and how others see us.

Seminars continue on Wednesday afternoon and all day Thursday.

Many of the Seminars are free of charge and you can book onto them, on the day, at our Seminar registration desk Hall Q8. All seminars will be held in Hall D. The entrance is via Hall Q.

A special free seminar for all those budding Master Greenkeepers will be held in the Restaurant area of Hall D on Tuesday 18 January between 10 am and 12 noon.

Thanks to sponsorship from TORO, we can, once again, present the Careers Fair at BTME & ClubHouse.

It will feature the well established Careers Clinic with Brin and Frank plus the highly acclaimed Job Wall and full details of careers in greenkeeping.

Anyone thinking about purchasing the OnCourse software package should visit BTME & ClubHouse, as one of the software programmers will be attending the show.

BITMC 2005

You should have received your brochure for the British and International Turf Managers' Conference in this magazine.

I am sure that you will agree that we have put together a varied first class programme at a superb location.

Staverton Park is situated near to Daventry and is easily reached from the M1, the M42, the M40 and the M6.

Birmingham International Airport is 25 minutes away, as is Birmingham International Railway Station. Many low cost airlines fly into Birmingham from around the UK and Europe.

The Centre has excellent accommodation and superb food plus a fully equipped leisure centre and it even has an 18-hole golf course.

We have negotiated a special rate for partners and we can arrange an outing to Blenheim Palace or recommend shopping centres if there is the demand.

Places for delegates are limited and you need to book early to be sure of your place.

The cost for delegates, that includes all meals and two-nights accommodation in a single room, is £376 including VAT for BIGGA members and £480 for non-members.

The cost for partners is £104 for dinner, bed and breakfast for two days.

GTC News

This month David Golding, GTC's Education Director, specifically looks at the workplace option for greenkeeper training.

It is with a positive note I hope to encourage more golf club employers to "invest" in their staff's education and training.

The GTC, having worked within the Government's national framework for qualifications and apprenticeships for many years, has received information that more funding is to be made available to ensure greenkeeper education and training is affordable for all levels.

Whether it is the apprenticeship scheme or the more academic Foundation Degree qualification the GTC will continue to not only ensure the content of the awards are relevant to our specialist sector but to ensure adequate funding is made available to our approved centres who offer the various courses.

The GTC received a bonus in 2002 when the European Social Fund (ESF) awarded a substantial level of funding to match the time put in by greenkeepers, in a senior position within the golf club, to train as work-based trainers and assessors.

As the two-year contract is coming to a close, with Plan-it Training the GTC is very hopeful that we will be able to confirm news that again our sector has been recognised as a model and further funding be made available to keep our successful programme on going.

I have previously reported that each year we see an increase in registrations for the work-based training qualifications and training schemes. This, I believe, is a trend that suits our sector and the increase in trainees is down to three main factors.

As the GTC trains more Course Managers, H/G's and Deputies as work-based trainers and assessors this ensures the understanding of vocational training and how it should operate benefits not only their trainee colleagues but the employer sees a sudden improvement both in their staffs skills and job satisfaction.

I truly hope that all this improvement is acknowledged through the Course Manager's reports to the employer and staff receive due recognition for their achievements.

Employers (often through their enlightened Course Manager) are investing in staff training which is very cost effective, work-based and prudent when maintaining their course and health and safety policy documents.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (1998) often known as the PUWER regulations are clear when stating the importance of competence of workers. I know many readers will be thinking "here we go again", quoting legislation as a requirement for training.

However, many older readers will remember the awful work conditions that were "provided" for greenkeepers both to maintain and store equipment in but worst still to have their lunch and snack breaks in.

Most golf club employers, again often through their competent Course Managers, have improved conditions for their staff before the "enforcers" have visited the site and while I know there are still some facilities which should be designated as "sites of septic scenery" thankfully they are now



David Golding.

in the minority.

One further factor that has taken most of the GTC's time is changing the way formal greenkeeper vocational education and training is delivered.

Traditionally our sector has used the "local" horticultural/agricultural college via the day or block release system but, for a variety of reasons, this service has faltered and this is no reflection on the excellent service given by the "named" turf lecturers. It would be unfair to name individuals but often you would name a college and more importantly you would name the "front man" for turf.

We cannot look back at the way the system was because if we as a sector want subsidised formal education and training we must work within the Government's structure, therefore what are today's options available to golf clubs?

One message has to be clear to employers, ensure your senior greenkeeping staff are up to speed with their own personal development which in turn will undoubtedly have a benefit to the rest of the staff and the course.

The GTC have recently produced a standard set of learning materials which are being used by our network of centres and this information can now be purchased for use "on the job".

Based on the best principles and practices for British golf courses the materials cover the knowledge within National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications at Levels 2 & 3.

A small number of the GTC's approved centres actually offer full on the job support to trainees but where there is an enlightened, qualified trainer/assessor on site this option works very well.

When the employer or often a Head Greenkeeper feels the trainee should attend college then the vocational training schemes can become difficult to maintain.

The on/off the job compromise can work with the trainee attending the centre for the knowledge and the skills training being carried out by the Course Manager.

It is still the responsibility of the chosen centre that the evidence both knowledge and practical is to the national standards.

The quality of the assessment is paramount and this has been where the GTC has invested heavily in recent years promoting the use of work-based assessors at every opportunity.

The GTC will continue to ensure the best principles are adhered to through its approved provider network and, with all the changes in college staff and resource levels, it may be no surprise that the committee are reviewing the network and I will update you on the progress being made in this area next month.

For up to date information on vocational training, apprenticeship schemes, trainer and assessor training contact the GTC on 01347 838640 or email david@the-gtc.co.uk Website www.the-gtc.co.uk

May I also take this opportunity on behalf of the GTC to wish you a very Merry Christmas and I hope to see you on the GTC stand at BTME & Clubhouse 2005.