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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.



Welcome

RID THE GAME OF THIS MONKEY ON OUR BACK

When I wrote about the drought issues in last month's column one of the scenarios I certainly didn't envisage was the one which has affected five golf clubs in the Bath area.

An unnamed militant group has vandalised one of them and sent letters to four others demanding they carry out specified action with the threat of more vandalism if ignored.

Among the list of demands are a 25% reduction in water usage; that 10% of each hole be returned to nature and that anti wildlife policies be reversed.

In this country freedom of speech is encouraged and everyone has a right to have their views heard, but when it comes to criminal vandalism a line has been crossed.

What concerns me, however, is that people who obviously feel so passionately about a cause can be so ignorant of the facts before they set out on a course of drastic action.

The cliché is that golf is a serial abuser of resource, and unfortunately some people react on the back of that hackneyed old cliché with nothing more than that to do on

To highlight this point, ironically, one of the clubs targeted by this group is a multiple prize winner in BIGGA's Golf Environment Competition. I'm sure that if the members of this group were to have the courage of their convictions and make themselves known, their minds would be put at rest with a visit to the golf club, not under cover of darkness wielding the tools of vandalism, but during the day carrying nothing more than an open mind. They wouldn't fail to be impressed by the knowledge, skill and dedication of the people who are the custodians of the land in their care.

It is up to all of us to sell the positive message of the game of golf and rid the game of this monkey on our back.

People working on the country's golf courses do some great work to enhance the environment, not drain it of valuable resources and it should be known about. That way we might prevent the faceless few picking up on the prejudices and baggage which is attached to golf and going on to carry out the mindless acts that these clubs are having to cope with.

Our best wishes go to the staff and members of the clubs involved and in particular Park Golf Club where I hope the damage done can be rectified fairly quickly.

This magazine is the last one to which Assistant Editor, Gareth Jones, has contributed. Gareth has been with BIGGA since 2004 and has decided to flex his vocal cords with a career in radio. He has done an excellent job in the time he has been with us and his contribution has certainly enhanced the magazine. My thanks and good wishes go with him and I look forward to hearing his dulcet tones coming at me from across the airwaves.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

SCOTTISH NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

The 2006 Scottish National Tournament will be held at Leven Links, Leven, Fife on Thursday June 22 2006 by kind permission of the Leven Links Joint Committee. The cost of the event will be £22.00, which includes coffee/tea, filled roll, evening meal and prizes. Apprentice fee will be £12.00.

Entry forms are available at all Section Spring Outings and from the Regional Administrator.

All entries with remittance must be sent to the Regional Administrator, Peter J. Boyd, 10 Meadowburn Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 6TA by Tuesday 13 June 2006. Cheques made payable to BIGGA Scottish Region.

ALLISS IN SHEFFIELD

The Sheffield Section welcomed special guest Peter Alliss to Rotherham Golf Club at a recent event.

Sporting a cast on his right ankle having broken it in Scotland the previous month, Peter was accompanied by his daughter Sara, who acted as chauffeuse and general chaperone for the trip. He spoke of his association with greenkeepers during his time as a PGA Professional, attached to various clubs in the UK and his admiration and respect he had for the work that they achieved and for the progress that has been made by the profession.

He then answered questions from the floor, which included his favourite course - Ferndown - and best ever shot - a 4-wood to the 18th in the 1965 Ryder Cup at Royal Birkdale which clinched a victory for he and Christy O'Connor over Arnold Palmer and Dave Marr.

The day was sponsored by Bernhard and Co, who were represented by UK Sales Manager, Steve Nixon, himself a former greenkeeper member of the Sheffield Section, and Marketing and Communications Manager, Gina Putnam.



Peter Alliss with daughter Sara, Sheffield Section President Neil Maltby, far left, with Richard Kerrigan and Gordon Brammah, right, with Gina Putnam and Steve Nixon of Bernhard

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY SERVICE

Continued funding from English Nature, the English Golf Union and the R&A means that the English Golf Environmental Advisory Service, created in 2002, can be extended for a fifth year.

All EGU affiliated golf clubs that have not taken part in the scheme, will be contacted with details of the project, which is being administered by STRI.

So far 180 golf clubs have benefited from the scheme over the last four years and over 100 clubs have received a framed certificate, acknowledging their commitment to ecological good practice.

Successful applicants will receive two ecological advisory visits with follow up reports. Clubs which successfully implement agreed environmental targets will receive a framed certificate to recognize their efforts. In addition all affiliated clubs will continue to have access to the free golf environmental support service run by STRI, including telephone contact and written advice in the form of leaflets providing conservation information on issues ranging from pesticides to management of the rough.

NEIL THOMAS MEMORIAL GOLF DAY

Anyone wishing to enter a team at the annual BIGGA Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day should contact Sarah Norris, at BIGGA HOUSE, Tel 01347 833800 email sarah@bigga.co.uk. Closing date for entries (subject to available slots) will be Monday May 15.

This year the Chairman's Nomination will be split the money raised between testicular and breast cancer charities.

A team can be entered for £200 + VAT with the day comprising a bacon roll on arrival, 18 holes of golf at Aldwark Manor Golf Club, a ploughman's lunch, half way house, a barbecue and the opportunity to win some spectacular prizes.

Holes can also be sponsored for £200 + VAT which gives signage on the chosen tee and recognition within the pages of Greenkeeper International.

The companies currently sponsoring the event are:- Rigby Taylor; Hunter Grinders; Premier Plan; Heath Lambert; Kubota; John Deere; Ransomes Jacobsen; Golf Finance; Toro; Hayter; Greentee Golf and the "A" Group of Hotels.

CWC FRANCHISEES GATHER FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Complete Weed Control's head office staff and franchisees headed to the Algarve recently for the company's annual conference. They gathered at the Penina Golf Resort, a past venue for the Portugese Open, for three days of seminars, networking and, of course, golf.

Bringing the franchisees together outside their working environment enables them to pool their knowledge and experiences, with the aim of raising the standard of the services they provide to their diverse client base. It also provides them with the opportunity to discuss issues which affect their

work, including new and changing legislation, product development and market trends.

"As well as being an enjoyable social occasion, the conference was hugely beneficial to me as a new franchisee. I can learn a great deal from the guys who have been operating successfully for years. It was very motivational, sitting together and talking about business development and different work situations. I went back to Scotland with lots of new ideas and a great support network to help me implement them," stated Keith Gallacher, owner of the Scotland South West.



NINE HOLE EXTENSION

Saddle Creek Resort - the gated, 900-acre Castle Cooke community in the scenic California Foothills - has announced that Carter Morrish, architect of the resort's existing 18-hole course, will design a new nine-hole layout on the property's northern reaches.

Once complete, Saddle Creek will feature 27-holes of challenging, resort-style golf available for play by members, residents and guests. The new nine will blend seamlessly with the existing, award-winning 18 hole circuit that opened in 1996 and

ranks as the No. 8 course in the state according to Golfweek.

"I am excited about the opportunity to team with Castle Cooke and Saddle Creek Resort to create an inviting, challenging resort golf experience. We'll strive to maintain the look and feel of the original 18 holes by creating similar bunker patterns, stunning visual corridors and green complexes," said Carter.

GARSDIDE SANDS STRENGTHENS

Following the acquisition of Aggregate Industries by Swiss company Holcim Ltd, Aggregate Industries' silica sand business, Garside Sands, and its Holcim counterpart, are working closely together to offer a wider product portfolio. The partnership also significantly increases the business' ability to supply in volume within the UK, across Europe and for international projects.

Garside Sands, based in Bedfordshire, and Holcim France's silica sand business, located in Nevers and Orléans, central France, have incorporated their product range to offer customers a greater variety of specialist graded silica sands for markets, including water filtration and industrial applications.

NEW SPONSORS FOR ENVIRONMENT COMPETITION

The future of the prestigious BIGGA Golf Environment Competition has been secured for the next three years thanks to the injection of sponsorship from two new industry partners.



Golf Environment
Competition

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd and Course Care will join the existing sponsoring companies of Scotts UK Professional and Syngenta Professional Products to ensure that the competition, which has helped to raise the profile of the outstanding environmental work done on the nation's golf courses, will continue to be the premier event of its kind in the game.

"We are delighted that Ransomes Jacobsen and Course Care have recognised the importance of the competition to the game of golf and their investment, together with that of our outstanding existing sponsors Scotts and Syngenta, will ensure that we can extend the reach of the judging process, so more clubs can benefit from visits from our expert judges," said BIGGA National Chairman, Richard Whyman.

The competition is in its ninth year and the role of honour includes some of the most environmentally committed courses in the country. The National winner receives £2000 to spend on environmental projects plus a weather station.

KESTREL FLY HIGH



Kestrel Golf & Sport's continual growth has resulted in the restructuring of the company. Kestrel Golf and Sports Limited will now trade under Kestrel (Contractors) Limited. Over the last decade, Kestrel has expanded into one of the UK's most respected natural and synthetic sportsground contractors.

In another move to ensure Kestrel deal with their growth efficiently and continue to offer high levels of attention to detail and customer satisfaction, they are set to move into new, bigger offices in March.

Kestrel has also appointed Joe Boniface as Sales and IT Development Manager to join their existing sales team. Joe, who recently graduated from Reading University with BA Honours in Accounting and Management, joins Kestrel at an exciting time.

"I am very pleased that Joe has joined our team and look forward to working with him on our continued expansion," commented Sales Director, Billy Martin.

GOLF CLUBS TARGETED

One golf club was actively vandalised and four others threatened with similar treatment in the Bath area last month.

An unnamed protest group ripped up five greens at Park Golf Club while four others received type written letters calling on them to revise their management regimes.

"We received a letter threatening vandalism if we carry out their four demands," said Andrew Boyce, Course Manager of Bath GC, a major winner in the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition over the last two years.

"We had to reduce water usage by 25%; 10% of each hole should be returned to nature; we had to reverse any policies which could be perceived to be anti-wildlife and we had to turn off all overnight lighting," explained Andrew, who stressed that the club were extremely pro-active in ensuring they ran in a sound, environmentally aware manner.

The protest group ripped up the 3rd, 4th, 9th, 10th and 11th greens at the Park Golf Club and promised there would be further action if their demands were not met.

Jim Galley, Club Manager at Bath, told The Daily Telegraph that they club used little water because doing so encouraged stronger grasses.

"There is a perception that golf abuses the environment but nothing could be further from the case," said Andrew, who also highlighted the difficulties in securing the average golf club from such attacks.

GENTLEMAN'S DINNER

The Gentleman's Dinner at Walton Heath has been going - according to a man who should know, Clive Osgood, Regional Administrator and long time Walton Heath Head Greenkeeper - for over 40 years and this year attracting a playing entry of 100 with 15 additional guests for dinner.

This year's champion was David Murdoch MG, Course Manager at Liphook GC, who won on countback while Steve Smith and Jim Brack, from Gillingham Golf Club, clinched the greenkeeper/club official prize. It was also pleasing to see Paul Weston, up at the prize table as winner of the 10-17 category, in the year he retires from Drift GC.



David Murdoch MG being presented with the traditional putter trophy by the Club Captain



George Barr being presented with a memento by Raymond Day to recognise his unstinting service as Regional Chairman

The Sisis putting competition also raised £50 for the Tadworth Children's Trust.

As ever Ian McMillan had the course in tip top condition, not just for the dinner but for the US Open Qualifier which it is hosting later in the year. The day would not be possible if it wasn't for the fine stable of sponsors the Region is lucky enough to be able to call upon.

"They all do a lot for the Region and we are very much indebted to them," said Clive.

Avoncrop; The Art of Grass; CMW; Construction Materials; Ernest Doe; Waste2Water; Gem; Grass Roots; Headland; John Shaw Machinery; Pure Turf Products; Rigby Taylor; Scotts; Tower Chemicals; Seoul Nassau; Sisis; Symbio; Tacit and Vitax.

NEW DISTRIBUTORS FOR LINDUM

Lindum Turf has increased the company's presence in Southern England with the appointment of two new distributors.

Green Farm Turf based at Billington, Leighton Buzzard will cover Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and parts of North London, while SCS Turf Specialists based five miles from Reading will supply Berkshire, North East Hampshire and North West Surrey. Both companies have existing customers from their respective landscaping concerns, and both wish to develop the turf supply side of their businesses.

Both S.C.S. Turf Specialists and Green Farm Turf have distribution rights for the whole range of Lindum Turf, and the two companies intend to share loads and transport costs. Lindum's Stephen Fell said he was impressed by the two men's

entrepreneurial skills, which had enabled them to establish themselves relatively quickly within the market place.

"Their energy and drive makes them ideally suited to extend our distribution network," he commented.



Mark Ward, left, and Julian Gosling

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NEW MARKETING AT HAYTER



Hayter has announced the appointment of Tracie Francis as Marketing Assistant. In her new position Tracie will be responsible for the marketing activities relating to exhibitions, advertising and promotions.

Tracie had already held positions in a number of customer dealing areas of the business including spare parts, service and sales. She took maternity leave for the birth of her son Euan. Tracie returned to work in October 2005 since when she has been working in marketing.

"Tracie has an extensive knowledge of the company and during her time in marketing has shown a natural flair for the work. With her enthusiasm, energy and obvious abilities she is the ideal candidate for this important role at Hayter," commented David Sturges, Sales and Marketing Director.

GET SNAPPING

The closing date for the BIGGA Photographic Competition closes on June 30, 2006. Successful entries will be used in the 2007 BIGGA calendar while one picture will be named the overall winner of the competition.

Pictures should be sent to Scott MacCallum, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, YO61 1UF as prints, slides or on a disc or emailed to scott@bigga.co.uk. Digital pics should be at least 300dpi and be at least nine inches by seven inches in size.

SOUTERS STRENGTHEN

Fast-expanding company Souters Sports Limited has appointed Oliver Gluyas as Civil Engineering Manager based in the North East of England to further develop the Company's client base and services.



Oliver, 27, has a strong background in sportsturf construction, maintenance and renovation, having previously worked for several large civil engineering contractors in the North East.

"I'm really looking forward to the new challenge and will be striving towards keeping up the high standard of work set by the Scotland and Cheshire branches. I'm also looking towards developing the business throughout the North East and firmly establishing the name of Souters Sports as the premier sportsturf contractor in the region," stated Oliver.

MY YEAR TO DATE



Geoff Wells, Deputy Head Greenkeeper of Gainsborough GC is the current Captain of the Golf Club. Here he gives us a run down of his year to date.

I am now well into my year as Captain at Gainsborough Golf Club and although it is time consuming the enjoyment I derive from it and the support from my family makes it all worthwhile. Although to my understanding it is not unique to be a greenkeeper and Captain it is indeed very rare so I feel I am among a very privileged few.

I started my year in office on Thursday November 3 last year at the clubs AGM and had my drive-in the following Sunday morning. There was breakfast for the 84 competitors at 7.30am before the nerve wracking tee-off in front them and about another 20 or so well-wishers. The rain that was forecast had so far held off and now was the time to be carried from the clubhouse to the 1st tee (not an easy task for I'm 6ft 5in and nearly 16st) my friends Paul and Jason, two strong lads, had earned their full English as they chaired me to the tee some 50yds or so. Now it was time for that all important drive and as I nervously took a couple of practise swings trying to ignore the banter I was told there was guesses for the length of my tee shot ranging from a fresh air to 280yds. After a couple of deep breathes and some shouts of encouragement I set myself and launched a beauty, straight at the green some 320yds away falling just short at 311yds the official measurement. I milked the applause.

A fantastic start to my year as Captain and it just gets better. We held a very successful Captain's

Charity Christmas raffle with over 90 prizes nearly all of them donated, which raised over £2,700, which was split between The Lady Captain's charities and mine. An excellent night was had by almost 200 members that turned up. My thanks to those in the trade that donated prizes and to those section members who bought tickets.

After quite a quiet start to the year our annual Golf Ball was a grand occasion, long frocks for the ladies, black tie and evening suits for the gents. After a sumptuous meal yours truly started the night's dancing with The Lady Captain as is tradition. A couple of brisk laps around the floor and then back to the table to soak her poor feet! In my size 12 shoes I'm definitely not Darren Gough or even close to it.

March another great month to remember this time nothing to do with my Captaincy but to be in the presence of perhaps the greatest sports commentator all time Peter Alliss it was an honour to be there and to shake the great man's hand. I have been a fan of his style of commentary and his brand of humour for as many years as I can remember. A real scoop for the Sheffield Section and especially Gordon Brammah in securing his services.

On March 31 the Lincs PGA held their inaugural Pro-Am and Dinner at Gainsborough GC. I was invited to enter a team for the golf and be present on the top table for the evening's festivities. Just missing the prizes by a stroke the evening was a very memorable affair. Among the dignitaries hosted by Head Professional of Forest Pines David Edwards the evenings principle speaker was Sandy Jones, Chief Executive of the PGA, with Adger Brown, the comedian, and very funny he was too. Sandy spoke of his many years with the PGA and his journeys around the globe. He brought along with him The Ryder Cup and those who took part in the day had the opportunity to have their picture taken with it. A small charge being made with the proceeds going to the Lincs PGA.

I am only part way through this most honourable years and if any of our members get the same opportunity as I have I would urge them to do it for it is not just a rewarding experience but you meet so many wonderful people along the way.

KUBOTA APPOINTS

Kubota has further strengthened its UK dealer network with the appointment of Pallisers of Hereford as an official agricultural sales and service dealer for Herefordshire, Worcestershire and parts of the neighbouring counties of Gloucestershire, Shropshire and Powys.

Based at Acorn Park, Yarkhill, near Hereford, Pallisers of Hereford was founded in 1993 by husband and wife, David and Anna Palliser. A branch was opened at Mere Green, Hanbury, near Droitwich in 1998. Together, the two operations

have a total of 30 staff with major emphasis placed on the provision of first-class after-sales service and parts support for all customers.

"There is a wealth of experience and technical know-how within our sales and after-sales departments. This experience will be invaluable to past, present and future Kubota users as we strive to build the business among customers in the public and private sectors throughout Herefordshire, Worcestershire and neighbouring areas," said Managing Director, David Palliser.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

In order for the course at Williamwood Golf Club on the outskirts of Glasgow to be in prime condition for the centenary year celebrations later this year, course manager Robert Johnston has taken delivery of a Jacobsen AR250 articulated rotary mower, specially designed for maintaining and enhancing semi-roughs.

Robert heads a team of six and has been at the club for 10 years. He began his career straight from school and spent 11 years at Cochrane Castle Golf

Club in Renfrewshire. He then moved to Ardeer Golf Club in Ayrshire as Head Greenkeeper and after four years moved south to take up a similar position at Newport Golf Club in South Wales.

"This being the Club's centenary we are pulling out all the stops to have the course looking its absolute best this year. We're also busy upgrading the course and are moving and installing bunkers as part of our renovation programme," said Robert.



MAJOR RENOVATIONS

Kaanapali Golf Courses - a Billy Casper Golf-managed property - has announced that the historic Tournament North Course is to undergo a number of layout renovations and will reopen for play in November.

Part of a two-year, \$13 million investment to enhance Kaanapali's courses and golf facilities, Robin Nelson is overseeing the work on the North

course. Last year, Nelson completed a successful re-design of Kaanapali's Resort South Course.

"We are excited to begin upgrading the storied Tournament North Course. Nelson's renovations will be more of a nip/tuck approach than a complete overhaul of the layout," said PGA General Manager Ed Kageyama.

ENGINE APPLICATION CENTRE EUROPE

Briggs & Stratton has opened its new Engine Application Centre Europe (EACE). To celebrate its opening, Briggs & Stratton invited a selection of its customers to view the test facility centre

Based in Germany, the EACE has had significant resources invested in it to develop and deliver the highest standards of engineering expertise available on the market. Encouraged by the success of its Milwaukee EAC, as well as the feedback of customers using EAC services, Briggs & Stratton has launched a second EAC to better serve the needs of its European customers.



Located at Briggs & Stratton's Viernheim, Germany, over 40 Briggs & Stratton customers had the opportunity to view the facilities. The mission of the new EACE is to, in partnership with its customers, develop the next generation of commercial equipment precisely focused on the European market.

CANAWAY RETIRES



Dr Mike Canaway has retired as the Chairman of the GTC technical committee. In September 1999 Mike chaired the first technical committee meeting of the GTC.

The GTC Board felt it was time to establish a committee of technical

experts to assist the two full time staff in the GTC office as the Board were 'not experts in turf maintenance'. The Board representatives had direct access to the funding bodies and thought it far more acceptable to have recommendations brought forward for funding by a technical committee.

His term in office has seen much progress in the sector with fellow committee members he has supported David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, to ensure greenkeepers and the golf club employers have a range of qualifications and training programmes including an apprenticeship which is the envy of many industries.

"I will miss Mike's encouragement, as at times when the work involves working within Government systems and departments it is easy to think we are banging our heads against a brick wall, but Mike has always believed in what we set out to establish back in 1999, said David.

DEMONSTRATION TRIALS

WRAP - the Waste & Resources Action Programme - has chosen five organisations to take part in a series of trials designed to demonstrate the performance and commercial benefits of using recycled wood products (RWPs) in a variety of landscaping applications.

The trials aim to increase awareness of the benefits of recycled woodchip as a mulch or as a surfacing material for pathways and playgrounds and build confidence with potential users. They will also allow WRAP to gather further evidence of the material's key performance properties which are: low maintenance/weed suppression, slope stability, resistance to wind drift and accessibility for wheelchairs/pushchairs.

The chosen trial projects are: Cornwall County Council, Rugby Borough Council, Redditch Borough, Adas/Tal Goed Nurseries and Giffords and Persimmon Homes.

"We received a high level of interest from organisations looking to take part in our formal demonstration trials of recycled woodchip for landscaping. This shows that demand and understanding of recycled woodchip's use as a mulch, pathway covering and playground surface has grown considerably," said Julia Turner, Material Development Manager for wood at WRAP.



David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, looks to raise the awareness of Certificates of Competence within the sector.

The word 'competence' has become increasingly important across all industries, especially as Health & Safety legislation has been taken more seriously by both employers and employees. Many working in the sector initially saw the legislation as needs must rather than best practise. My experience tells me that the Health & Safety legislation has improved greenkeepers working conditions greatly during the last ten years.

The GTC and BIGGA has supported the greenkeeping sector by producing recording documentation ranging from a wall-chart to the more detailed documentation of the Machinery and Work Equipment training and assessment manual.

In addition the training manual used by N/SVQ Level 2 candidates has a section within each task for recording the learner's competence including the date of assessment. It is now nine years since the GTC in association with the Health & Safety Executive produced a Golf Course Management Guidelines booklet that is currently being updated.

All of these documents are available through BIGGA and the GTC offices. The initial establishment of a recording system may take a few hours to implement but the maintenance of staff records, while an on-going task, it is not time consuming.

The formal certificates, which cover many of the maintenance tasks carried out on the golf course, are the National Proficiency Test Council's (NPTC) Certificates of Competence (CoC's). The independently assessed CoC's are offered through many of the GTC Approved Training Providers and many Centres offer them in conjunction with N/SVQ Level 2 Sports Turf.

Employers are encouraged to use the CoC's as the formal recognition of staff competence in such areas as the Safe Use of Pesticides, Manual Handling, Tractor Driving and the Safe Use of Mowers. Any golf club with a qualified work-based assessor has a real advantage over clubs that have as yet not ensured their senior Greenkeeper has yet achieved the qualification authorising the assessment of staff to the national standards.

While the NPTC has a network of Centres offering the CoC's and only their own assessors can assess CoC's any N/SVQ assessor should be well up to speed on recording staff competencies at their own workplace. Hopefully your golf club never has to receive an official visit from Health & Safety representatives following an accident or incident but be prepared for visits by the local inspectorate.

Specialist H&S advisors are also available within the sector should the club require support for a particular issue. As formal on the job training is now the norm good record keeping also should be the norm and the Course Manager in association with the employer can access support to ensure there is a safe working environment supported by current staff records of competence.

Informal training often linked to the formal qualifications such as N/SVQ's, HNC/D, Foundation Degree and the CoC's can be an excellent experience for some learners.

The excellent management tutors, Brin Bendon and Frank Newberry, have through recent years, assisted literally hundreds of greenkeepers to become better supervisors and managers through their understanding of the employer's needs as well as the learners.

Every effort is made through close consultation with the Home Unions, BIGGA and the R & A (all members of the GTC), to ensure that only recognised consultants/tutors are engaged in the delivery of quality education. I believe this objective has been consistently met over the years as the greenkeeping sector is admired by the rest of the land-base sector for its united approach to quality education and training provision.

Not forgetting our "friends" in the GTC Approved Training Providers who also often have the resources at hand to be best placed to offer both formal and informal education and training programmes and the range of qualifications and CoC's.

First Aid courses are readily available in all parts of the country through specialist private training providers as well as the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance and not forgetting that this type of training is also included within the Greenkeeping Apprenticeship framework.

The Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI), have for many years offered excellent short courses, which are still available. More recently, the Institute, in association with BIGGA and the Scottish Golf Union organised a series of short seminars for Green Convenors/Course Managers. They were held at three venues throughout Scotland and proved to be very successful.

Hopefully you will see from this that whilst the GTC encourages employers and greenkeepers to use the formal qualifications to recruit and develop staff development plans it is also very aware of the importance and benefits of short courses.

Short courses which can be informal "fun" learning sessions or legislative formal certificates can often be stepping stones to vocational or the more academic qualifications.

If you require specific advice on any of the above please do not hesitate to contact the GTC on 01347 838640 and/or BIGGA on 01347 833800.

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