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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

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Welcome

PLAYING KING CANUTE WILL BE EXPENSIVE

Recent reports on the impact of coastal erosion have suggested that some of the country's finest links courses may have to lose holes and amend layouts to survive.

The Scotsman newspaper reported last month that many clubs have already spent considerable sums of money on coastal defences - including Royal Dornoch who last year spent £300,000 to protect their 10th hole - but that they may prove to be nothing more than short term measures.

Three options are given by the Earth Surface Dynamics Research Group - hard defences of rock armour and gabion baskets; replenishing sand that has been removed from dunes, and finally, and sadly the most foolproof, repositioning tees, greens and even entire holes inland to escape the sea. The first two options are seen as short term, with expensive defences potentially swept away entirely on the back of a single devastating storm, but the third has consequences for all golf lovers with a sense of history.

You don't have to think too long to come up with courses and holes which could - many experts will say "will" - be lost to the sea and to the game of golf. Such is their "on the edge" nature they would be among the most dramatic and famous holes in all of golf. Off the top of my head I can think of several on the Open rota including the par-3 11th on the Old Course where the green edges on to the Firth of Tay; the coastal stretch of holes at Turnberry, while some at Hoylake, where the Open was played earlier this year, are perilously close to the beach.

But it is not just the Open courses that would be affected. There are scores of clubs throughout the country where the signature hole is one where you tee off or putt out with the roar of the waves, the smell of the salt and the touch of the spray playing havoc with your senses. It makes you feel so alive, even if your golf is leaving you numb.

But what are the alternatives? Many clubs have gone down the hard defence route and have perhaps bought themselves some time, but it might be prudent to look at the other, less palatable options, and research where alternative holes might be sited when you are forced to face up to the inevitable.

That may mean eating into your practice range; draining land previously considered to be less than suitable or, looking beyond the club boundaries, investigating how much your neighbouring farmer would accept for the field which borders the course.

The implications are huge - re-routing layouts created by the masters of their art in the last century and beyond - but that may still be better than being left with the finest 17 hole course in the land.

Coastal erosion is something man has fought against for centuries and as King Canute found, when water started lapped over his wellies, standing against it can be a futile exercise.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Golf clubs could soon be enjoying lower insurance premiums thanks to a joint initiative by the Association of Golf Club Secretaries (AGCS) and the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA).

The AGCS and BIGGA have both been giving Health and Safety advice and guidance to their members for some time. However, the two organisations felt that there was a need to have a standardised Safety Management System (SMS), that contained example risk assessments, that met the needs of all golf clubs, that was common throughout the industry, that was easy to update and was easily available to their respective members.

Not only that, they felt that introducing a standardised SMS could help with inspections by environmental health officers/HSE inspectors and lead to a management system that would be best

practice throughout golf in the United Kingdom. They also agreed that the SMS should be Internet based and that it should be available free to all members of their respective Associations.

The Chief Executive of BIGGA, John Pemberton and the National Secretary of the AGCS, Keith Lloyd agreed that the two Associations should pool their resources to produce an Internet based SMS that will help all golf clubs ensure that their clubs are safe and healthy places for employees and golfers.

Thanks to sponsorship by Ransomes Jacobsen, valuable help from both Brian Butler and Xact Consulting, advice from a wide range of Health and Safety consultants including Jon Allbut, and close cooperation between the two associations, the AGCS/BIGGA Safety Management System will be available on the Association's web sites from late January 2007.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER OPENS £15 MILLION FACTORY

Conservative Party Leader the Rt Hon David Cameron MP, has officially opened a new £15 million JCB manufacturing plant in India.

Employing more than 200 people, JCB Manufacturing Ltd is based in Pune and began producing components for JCB machines last year.

Mr Cameron, accompanied by Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne MP, cut a ribbon to mark the official opening of the new plant in the Talegaon Dabhade district of Pune.

Mr Cameron was visiting India in recognition of the country's increasing importance to the global economy and to Britain. He said: "This new JCB plant at Pune demonstrates the changes taking place not just in India but also in the global economy. It also highlights the benefit of a new relationship between India and Britain to meet the challenges of this changing world economy."

John Patterson, JCB Managing Director and CEO, said: "India is now JCB's second largest market and

sales here have quadrupled in the last five years. JCB is market leader in India and it's important we continue to invest heavily to keep pace with the growth we anticipate in the future."



JCB Chairman Sir Anthony Bamford pictured with David Cameron, Leader of the Conservative Party, at the factory's official opening

DLF-TRIFOLIUM LEADS THE WAY

DLF-Trifolium Group, the Danish based and farmer owned grass seeds group with an annual turnover of approximately £270 million, consolidates its position as the world's largest grass seed company, through its acquisition of Advanta Seeds' grass seed activities within research, field production, seed conditioning and wholesale. The seller is Limagrain-Verneuil Holding, part of Group Limagrain, the French based and farmer owned seeds group with an annual turnover of approximately £1.1 billion, which in a simultaneous deal acquires the arable crops business of

DLF-Trifolium Group outside Denmark.

The takeover of Advanta Seeds' grass and clover business comprises of an annual sale of approximately 20,000 tonnes of clover and grass seeds.

"The acquisition of the grass seeds activities of Advanta Seeds complements our product portfolio and allows us to further benefit from economics of scale for the benefit of our owners and customers," says Truels Damsgaard, CEO of the DLF-Trifolium Group.

BIGGA MIDLAND REGION - ACCIDENT REPORTING AND HEALTH & SAFETY WORKSHOP

The Midland Region is holding a Practical Accident Reporting and Health and Safety workshop at Gay Hill GC on Thursday, November 16. The workshop will run from 9am until 4pm and will involve practical exercises in groups, looking at a simulated vehicle accident and H&S Hazards in the Greenkeeping Shed. Attendance is open to

BIGGA members and golf club officials and invitations were sent out in early October. Refreshments will be provided. For more information, contact Peter Larter, Midland Regional Administrator, on: 01476 550115 or email: peterlarter972@aol.com

FORMBY HALL GC PLANS REVEALED

Formby Hall GC, the Maghull Group, has revealed how the club will look once its current £10 million re-development is complete.

Earlier this year, Sefton Council's Planning Committee approved the Maghull Group's plans to develop the UK's first PGA affiliated National Residential Golf Academy within the exclusive Formby Hall Golf and Country Club.

The centre of excellence at Formby Hall GC, situated on Southport Old Road, Formby, Merseyside, will be the only PGA branded National Residential Golf Academy in the UK when it opens in 2007. The new academy is set to launch ahead of the Open Golf Championships

being held at Royal Birkdale GC, just along the coast.

As part of the redevelopment of Formby Hall GC, a new nine-hole par 3 golf course is being constructed in addition to the existing 18-hole championship course. The development will also comprise a 62 bedroom luxury golf residence, spa, swimming pool and fitness centre and also a golf science academy for group and individual tutorials with recognised golf pros.

Joe Fleetwood, Director of Golf at Formby Hall GC, said: "Once the project is complete, Formby Hall Golf Club will become a haven for golf tourists, attracting visitors from all over the UK and even the US."



HORTICULTURE STUDENTS WIN

A team of horticulture students from Writtle College, Chelmsford, won a bronze in the final of the UK Landscape Skills Competition 2006 - a national competition organised by UK Skills and the British Association of Landscape Industries, held at the IOG Saltex Exhibition.

Fred Harris (20 from Knebworth, Hertfordshire) and Michael Freeman (19 from Tiptree) both studying further education Horticulture courses at the college, were competing against five other colleges from across the UK, and given three days to build a garden from a plan given to them at the start of Saltex.

The UK Landscape Skills Competition gives students and trainees the opportunity to benchmark their skills alongside each other, while also gaining skills and experience. The national final is made up of the winning teams from the various regional finals that took place throughout 2006. The Writtle



Left to right: Fred Harris, Martin Robinson, Michael Freeman, Josh Phipps

College team won their qualifying heat in May 2006 and were supported by students Josh Phipps and Martin Robinson, who took part in the Regional Final with Michael and Fred.



Following the decision taken by several of the traditionally larger exhibitors not to attend Harrogate Week 2007, the organisers have decided to consolidate the UK's premier fine turf show into Harrogate International Centre's four largest halls.

"Despite the well publicised decision of some companies to attend Harrogate Week every other year - missing 2007 - stand sales have been extremely encouraging. However, it did mean we had some spare floor capacity and after due consideration we felt that we can give exhibitors and visitors the best possible experience by consolidating into the main Halls," said BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton.

"We have a spectacular Education Programme lined up for 2007, involving more than 27 Seminars and 11 Workshops, which we are sure will excite the thousands of people who are regularly attracted to Harrogate from all over the world. We also know that the 'Exhibition Buzz', for which Harrogate Week is renowned, will be in evidence as always," said John, who reiterated that the Springfield House entrance would be retained thus providing access to Hall C.

Exhibitors who had booked into Hall Q have been relocated into one of Halls A, B, C or M.

Harrogate Week 2007 runs from Sunday January 21 to Thursday January 25, 2007. For information on visiting or exhibiting visit: www.harrogateweek.org.uk

PRACTICAL TURF MANAGEMENT

Peter Wisbey has recently left his role as Courses Manager at the National Golf Centre, Woodhall Spa, whose Hotchkin course was this year ranked number one inland course in the UK by Golf World. He will now be concentrating on further developing his course management consultancy, Practical Turf Management Ltd.

With more than 40 years of course management experience, Peter is able to offer clients his practical approach to raising standards, while working within defined budgets. He has extensive knowledge of heathland, parkland, downland and links courses together with a comprehensive understanding of warm and cool season grasses.

If you are interested in talking to Peter, please call: 01526 321471 to discuss your consultancy needs.



WINNER!

Sue Foster, BSc (Hons) Horticulture student from Writtle College, has won the IPPS Richard Martyr Award 2006, a national competition that recognises the achievements of those with practical projects, testing innovative ideas in plant propagation and production. Rosanna Bowyer, also a BSc (Hons) Horticulture student from Writtle College, was awarded second place.



The Awards are organised by the International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS) and are open to nursery staff and college students from across Great Britain and Ireland. They are for those running projects that are essential to the continual drive for improved skills, efficiency and quality in the nursery industry. The winning project is the one that most impresses the judges in terms of its originality, scope, execution and relevance, and which has made the most impact on the personal development of the individuals who have undertaken it.

Sue won the first prize for the work covered by her dissertation which looked at extracting compounds from the tropical plant *Cleome gynandra* and testing them for their effects in repelling red spider mite, a serious pest of roses. A cheap and easily made plant extract which proves to be effective in repelling mites would be of great interest to cut flower rose growers worldwide.

Sue received a prize of £800 cash plus a free year's membership to the IPPS.

GREENKEEPING STAFF RELY ON TOP DRESSING

Tycrop's ProPass 180 Top Dresser has won universal praise from greenkeeping staff at The Celtic Manor Resort, venue of the 2005 Wales Open and the 2010 Ryder Cup.

"I'd been looking for an effective spinner-type top dresser for some time," explained Jim McKenzie, Director of Estates and Ryder Cup Course Development at The Celtic Manor Resort.

"The ProPass 180 was selected primarily on the recommendation of several greenkeeping colleagues who told me about its ability to spread wet or dry dressing very consistently on a little but often basis. To be quite honest, the results to date have been better than we expected."

GTC EXPERIENCE ACKNOWLEDGED

The experience of the GTC in greenkeeper education and training has been acknowledged through an R&A research questionnaire distributed to European golf federations.

Following the circulation of the questionnaire to all European golf associations in 2004, analysis showed that many countries have no greenkeeper education and training systems in place.

"Obviously, in countries where the game is very much in its infancy, employers rely on importing qualified staff to manage the course and often local labour is used to maintain the course," said Education Director at the GTC David Golding, adding this could also apply to British golf club employers.

"While the GTC is assisting golf developing countries to establish standards of greenkeeper education it will still continue to ensure the British golf clubs and greenkeepers have access to the best possible education and training system," said David.

A pan-European advisory group has been established to investigate the possibility of introducing a system of greenkeeper education and training which countries could support and see the benefits to improving the playing standards of golf courses on behalf of the employers and greenkeepers they represent.

This will rely on support from the countries' golf union or federation and the greenkeeping association who, from the outset, will be encouraged to work together as happens here in Britain.

The British Home Unions and BIGGA are all Board members of the GTC and with support from the R&A - also Board members - and the PGA European Tour there is a clear commitment to work together for arguably the most important aspect of the sport - the playing surfaces.

"The current great debate - the sustainable golf course - instigated mainly by the R&A will only be adopted and implemented if golf clubs have a management 'team' which is fully aware of the current issues facing the business," added David.

He said the most pleasing aspect of the first meeting of the advisory group was that many of the issues facing the game are at least pan-European if not world wide and there was a tremendous will to address them collectively.

"Golf unions, federations and greenkeeping associations have all 'subscribed' to this R&A website

and, as registrations are reaching 2,000, the golf community is finally looking to support each other and this is what the pan-European greenkeeping advisory group intends to do," said David.

There is still work to do on the proposal and when the standards are agreed it will be for each country to deliver programmes of education and training to meet the pan-European standards in a manner to suit the country.

The group recommended three levels for the occupational standards - Golf Course Greenkeeper, Golf Course Supervisor and Golf Course Manager.

A list of skills with the related knowledge will now be developed for each level and the group will circulate these as a minimum standard for consultation.

It is also suggested that a certificate be issued when a student has met the European standards through their country's system of qualifications. A rigorous quality assurance system would be established to maintain and monitor the certification scheme.

The advisory group suggested there were many benefits for the greenkeeping sector to have pan-European standards, not least that employers throughout Europe would know exactly what skills and knowledge any job applicant would have when presenting a certificate achieved through the system.

"The benefits to greenkeepers would include the opportunity to move within the European greenkeeping community with certificates which are respected and understood by employers," he added.

"We hope that all the golf unions and federations will back this initiative and, with the Greenkeeping associations, BIGGA and FEGGA, already fully supporting the advisory group's work, there is a great opportunity through education and training to unite even closer the greenkeeping profession."



WEATHER FORCES A DRAW AT PAIRS FINALS

An awesome course and a great deal of weather were the order of the day at Wentworth for this year's final of the Midland Section Greensomes Knockout Pairs competition, an event run by BIGGA and sponsored by Scotts.

Defending finalists of the last three years: Ed Stant, of Penn GC and Paul Woodham, of Gay Hill GC, were pushed hard by the two young challengers Adam Moss and James Moverley, both from Blackwell GC. However, the weather got the better of the group,

with drizzle slowly turning to torrential rain, thunder and lightening. By the 12th tee everyone was soaked, so grudgingly the players declared the contest a draw and retired to the clubhouse to dry off. At that point, of course, the sun came out!

Mark Rayner, of Scotts, said. "Even though the weather wasn't great, we had a good day and the course looked superb as ever. Many thanks to Chris Kennedy at Wentworth for allowing us to play on his fantastic course."



Three of this year's finalists at the Wentworth contest, left to right, Paul Woodham, Adam Moss and Ed Stant

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NEW WIZARD OF OZ



Rob Jenkins has travelled a long way to join Campey Turf Care Systems. He hails from Australia and has just been appointed as the company's Area Representative for the north Midlands and South Yorkshire.

Rob brings a hands-on approach to the job. He has been working in greenkeeping for eight years, most recently at Northcote GC near Melbourne.

With his considerable experience of achieving the best sports turf surfaces, Rob is looking forward to imparting his knowledge to other grounds care professionals.

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM COMPLETE

The final element in achieving a fully integrated management system was realised recently, when Ransomes Jacobsen were accredited with OHSAS 18001 by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA), one of the world's leading management systems and certification companies.

OHSAS 18001 is an internationally recognised occupational health and safety (OH&S) specification, designed to enable organisations to control OH&S risks, improve performance and demonstrate good governance. It involves a structured approach to hazard identification and risk management which can contribute to the provision of a healthier and safer working environment.

Using this approach, it is possible to avoid a high proportion of accidents and occupational health problems, which will help reduce lost time through employee illness and injury. The management of health and safety becomes more transparent and effective and helps minimise the risk of accidents.

Commenting on this latest achievement, Dave Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen said, "This is the final piece of the jigsaw which sees us achieving a totally integrated management system having already gained ISO 9001 for quality management and ISO 14001 for environmental management.

"We have again demonstrated that we are committed to improvement right across the business by producing high quality products for our customers, in a safe working environment for our staff and in a way that limits our impact on the environment, which is good for everyone. We are an industry leading organisation and have adopted these initiatives, which envelop a company-wide philosophy permeating everything we do."

DIMARCO TO DEFEND ABU DHABI GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

Chris DiMarco, the man who ranks among the USA's top ten golfers, has confirmed he will return to the UAE capital in January to defend his inaugural Abu Dhabi Golf Championship title.



DiMarco is among a number of the world's leading players who have confirmed they will contend the title. Others include European Ryder Cup team member Sergio Garcia of Spain, who came third in the inaugural Abu Dhabi Golf Championship and is now ranked eighth in the world. They are joined by South Africa's Retief Goosen, now sixth in the Official World Golf

Rankings, who will make his debut on the magnificent National Course of the Abu Dhabi Golf Club.

Speaking of his determination to all-out defend his 2006 title, the 38-year-old DiMarco said: "Earlier this year Abu Dhabi and I made golfing history - and while it's commonly held that history never repeats itself - I shall be looking to turn that particular saying on its head next January.

The Abu Dhabi Golf Championship 2007, sanctioned by The European Tour and the UAE Golf Association with a US \$2 million prize fund, will be contested from January 18-21 with the

Championship committee promising a star-studded international player line-up, an enhanced course layout and improved additional facilities at the golf course.

The tournament is set to build on the success of this year's launch event. For more information visit: www.abudhabigolfchampionship.com

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Writtle College received Highly Commended from judges in the Award for 'Most Outstanding Commitment to Education and Training in Horticulture' at the Horticulture Week Awards 2006, held at the Hurlingham Club in London on Tuesday, October 3.

The Awards are the leading annual event that recognises the very best in achievement, ability and

performance across the entire horticultural industry. They are organised by Horticulture Week, which is one of the industry's leading trade and professional magazines, and are sponsored by the Horticultural Trades Association. Writtle College was one of only three finalists nominated for the Award and the only college at the event.

NEW NORTH OF ENGLAND BASE

Askham Bryan College in Yorkshire is the new location for Rustons Engineering's demonstration fleet of compact tractors and ancillary amenity equipment in Northern England.

Reco has supplied the college with three Kioti compact tractors on a commercial contract hire basis and has lent a further four tractors and a range of equipment including: flail and rotary mowers, hedge cutters, rotavators, stone buriers, back hoes and fertiliser spreaders. The on-loan

machinery is available for use by the college for teaching and grounds maintenance when it is not needed for demonstrations to dealers and end-users.

Horticulture courses attract some 100 full and part-time students a year to Askham Bryan College, which also has extensive grounds with seven sports pitches and provides services to local schools and other organisations. Last year it won the UK Landscape Skills Competition.



Kioti tractor line-up at Askham Bryan College. Left to right: Mark Willerton, K&M Mowers; Phil Mandy, AB College Finance Director; Stewart Ward and Ian Brown, Rustons Engineering

GRASSFELT FOR FOOTBALL - BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

Three hundred and fifty square metres of Lindum's Grassfelt are currently on show as part of the Liverpool Biennial International Festival of Contemporary Art.

Situated in the Goree Piazza, in the shadow of the famous Liver Building, the Grassfelt covers a football pitch but not as we know it. Costa Rican artist Priscilla Monge, who pushes familiar objects into the unknown, has given her sports field a lunar landscape, changing the expected flat surface into a surreal series of mounds and gullies.

Landscape architect David Buck who collaborated on the landscape design says that the material was perfect for the subject. "The grass needed to look as if it had grown on site," he explains. "Obviously, there was no time for that."



The 330 sq metre untitled art work, which took 160 cubic metres of recycled material to build, was constructed by Talbot Sports Turf Installation, and will be on show until the Festival closes on November 26.

CLUB CAR KEEPS THE RYDER CUP ON COURSE

Club Car has been the official car and utility vehicle of the Ryder Cup for the last decade keeping the event and players on track on both sides of the Atlantic, whatever the weather. The rain in Spain in 1997 certainly dampened American spirits at Valderamma, but no one could have anticipated the arrival or effects of Hurricane Gordon, which battered a path across southern Ireland just days before the 2006 event.

High winds forced officials at the K Club to close the course to spectators and all non-essential staff at the start of the second practice day. Gusts in excess of over 40mph caused both teams to delay their practice sessions, and heavy rainfall left bunkers flooded - all this before play even started!

Despite Hurricane Gordon's best efforts, Club Car and its support teams led by Liam Ross of the Buggyman, and Don Donaldson of Caddy Car still managed to ensure that the K Club delivered a seamless professional event enjoyed by spectators and players alike. Liam was contracted to manage the fleets before, during and after the event, and Don was contracted by the European Tour to look after their Club Car

units as well as the TV units, which were used by broadcasters from all over the World.

The challenges faced by greenkeeping and grounds staff as a result of the torrential downpours were numerous. As well as the on course problems, once the thousands of spectators arrived, pathways and viewing areas quickly turned to mud and grounds staff had to urgently resolve the problem by using the Club Car fleet of 20 252 rough terrain vehicles, 10 Turf 2 Electric and 10 Turf 2 petrol vehicles to get the site and the course back into tip top condition.



This year's European Team at the K Club



"I'M A LADY!"

All ladies working in the turf industry are invited to attend the Women's Forum at Harrogate Week. There was no meeting at Saltex this year, so come along on to the Education Suite on the first floor of the Harrogate International Centre (above Hall C) on Tuesday, January 23 from 4.30pm until 5.30pm to hear speaker Frank Newberry talk about 'Managing Upwards... managing your boss'. There'll also be a presentation on interviewing staff so please make a note in your diaries and come and join us. It's a great networking opportunity, the ideal time to put names to faces, refreshments will be available and there are plans to go out for a drink in Harrogate town afterwards. Don't worry if you haven't been before - you'll receive a very warm welcome.

For further information, please contact Rosie Hancher at BIGGA on: 01347 833800.

ROYAL WARRANT EXTENDED

John Deere has been granted an extension to its Royal Warrant, which now uniquely covers the supply of agricultural, grounds care and horticultural products to The Queen's household.



The Royal Warrant was first awarded to John Deere Limited in 1970, for the supply of agricultural equipment to Her Majesty The Queen. Royal Warrants are a mark of recognition to people or companies who have regularly supplied goods or services for at least five years to certain members of the Royal Family. They have always been regarded as a mark of excellence and the highest standards of service and quality.

SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

Rolawn, Britain's largest turf grower and leading topsoil supplier, have incorporated all their recent initiatives for greenkeepers and groundsman in a special edition of 'The Blade' their trade newsletter.

The publication highlights their new Medallion® turf cultivar mixture and Turfmaster™ system. Copies are available from: info@rolawn.co.uk or by phoning: 0845 604 6085.





UNITED AT LAST!

David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, looks forward to the 2007 Continue to Learn "experience" and having been involved in the early years of BIGGA's education programme, he commends this year's programme to readers...

While much of the GTC's day to day work is to do with the formal range of sports turf qualifications and developing the partnership with our Approved Training Providers, the Board, in representing golf club employers in Britain and greenkeepers, time is taken out to work closely with BIGGA when the programme for Harrogate week is in its developmental stage.

The GTC, as the main sponsor of the Continue to Learn programme during Harrogate Week, has had an input into the programme through its technical committee and I for one cannot remember seeing an education programme quite like 2007's!

Having taken on board all the various suggestions from members, trade associates and other interested parties Ken, Sami and the BIGGA education committee should be rewarded by many people from all sides of the sports turf sector, making their way to Harrogate in January.

With much debate in the sector relating to exhibitions, one thing that the golf sector cannot be accused of is not working together or being fragmented.

The list of contributors to the education programme proves that we can be united and my apologies if I have left any organisation out. Here come the acronyms!

The GTC representative bodies and funding bodies are the R&A, EGU, SGU, WGU, BIGGA and the PGA European Tour also present will be the PGA, STRI, AGCS, EIGCA, LDCA, GEE, and FEGGA or in more simple terms: Governing bodies, employer representative bodies, architects, constructors, advisors, professional golfers, secretaries and greenkeepers!

During my days working for BIGGA we had a separate conference and there still are very important Regional and Section events but the annual gathering of the specialists from the turf sector is THE important date in your calendar.

Not forgetting the added benefit of an abundance of quality trade lecturers who often are wrongfully accused of "just selling their products" and have a wealth of up to date knowledge to share.

The healthy debate, which can be heard both inside and outside the workshops and seminars, is priceless and the camaraderie in the turf sector is second to none.

We have all read the sustainable golf course opinions and the debates will continue prior to, during and following the Harrogate Week 2007 but one thing is

certain golf courses will be the winners as all the various factions involved in the sport come together to share their knowledge and experiences.

This year we have seen arguably the two most high profile events in golf the Open Championship and the Ryder Cup, played on very contrasting surfaces but both providing great publicity for the game.

Both clubs, in association with the organisers, set out an agenda to make the events successful and the Course Managers carried out their duties with great professionalism as did their team of greenkeepers but the point I would like to make is that for any successful event their has to be a team effort!

The Continue to Learn programme is just that and the range of workshops and seminars show there is something there for everyone.

The GTC is holding a seminar for its Approved Training Providers during the Harrogate Week and with many turf lecturers heading for this seminar they may well be arranging a visit for their students - after all, turf lecturers and registered students can attend seminars free of charge!

Given the excellent diversity of the programme my advice is to book early.

Oh and by the way, during the five days of education there is an exhibition!

To view the Continue to Learn programme online, visit: www.the-gtc.co.uk or www.bigga.org.uk

GTC is supported by:

