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Chairman's Column



Time to stand up and be counted

On returning from the Toro student of the year finals, where once again the professionalism shown by all the candidates was extremely high, my congratulations go to all the finalists whom I am sure will have learnt so much by taking part. Each finalist will sit back and take stock of their performance and identify their strengths and weaknesses, which I am sure we all do on occasions - if not we should do. On the back of our own assessment or appraisal done by others, we will have highlighted areas where improvement can be achieved through further training.

As you look through the Harrogate Week educational programme that is included in this issue, you will find many educational opportunities available to you at very competitive prices. It is up to every one of you to make your employers aware of the savings they can make by you just being a member of BIGGA.

My congratulations go to this year's winner of the Toro Student of the Year - Mike Emptage - who is set for an unbelievable period in his life, meeting fellow greenkeeping students from around the world, as he enrolls on an intensive university programme. Mike will also get the chance to visit the Toro factory and attend the GCSAA show.

Our thanks to Toro who have sponsored the Student Greenkeeper of the Year award for 18 years, giving so many students the chance to better themselves.

As mentioned earlier in my article, the Continue to Learn educational programme is now available. As most of you are aware, the programme is run in conjunction with the BTME trade show, with exhibitors covering the full range of equipment, chemicals and materials required for all sports surfaces. Many of you will be aware that the revenue from the show is a large part of the Association's income, with profits being ploughed back into benefits to you, the members, mainly in the form of subsidised education. As we enter a difficult period with a few of the leading manufacturers not exhibiting in 2007, it is time that we, the members, should stand up and be counted and attend Harrogate week in large numbers, this is the best way to show our industry that we are passionate about our profession and our Association. Many people would say that education should come from the employer and the employer should pay the going rate, I'm afraid that in



the real greenkeeping world this doesn't happen and without the profits from Harrogate your Association wouldn't be able to fill the educational gap. So if you haven't made your mind up yet, think of the big picture and support the week and your association. Recently I attended my Section's committee meeting and was delighted to hear such positive feelings regarding Harrogate week and the need to support it. The Section have decided to provide transport and subsidised accommodation on a first come first served basis, hopefully each Section around the country will be planning something on those lines. On the left of my column you will find all the companies who have already signed up for BTME. You can click online to Harrogate week and view their websites for more information.

Champion of BIGGA

My Champion of BIGGA this month is Ian Willett, Course Manager at Thorpeness GC in Suffolk and currently the East Anglia Section Secretary. Earlier this year Ian received the unsung heroes award in recognition for the enthusiastic help he offers our profession, Ian is very keen on education and successfully administrates a number of educational events within his Section.

Richard Whyman
Chairman



BIGGA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

FREE LEGAL HELPLINE

Access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for you and your family (living at the same address). Advice on employment matters, health and safety issues, consumer rights and any other legal matter. Medical costs and expenses should personal injury be sustained in an accident and Legal expenses up to £50,000 per annum. Call 0800 019 2569 For Greenkeeper Members Only.

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Cover for time off work due to an accident at home, work or even on holiday as well as one off payments dependent on the type of injury. Call 01277 251000 and ask for Ira Mullish For Greenkeeper Members Only.

FREE MEMBERS HANDBOOK

A free yearly copy of this indispensable tool, enabling members to track down professional help and keep contact with contemporaries.

FREE FIELD GUIDES

A set of field guides is available to every member on request. This handy guide is produced in an easy to use format and is an aid to course identification. Call 01347 833800.

FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

A monthly copy of the Association's award winning magazine delivered free to your door, keeping you up to date with all that's new in the industry.

BIGGA LIBRARY

The BIGGA Library boasts over 650 books available to borrow for up to six weeks. The only cost is that of returning the book to HQ.

BIGGA REFUND OF FEES SCHEME

Members may apply for an 80% refund of education and training fees up to a maximum of £350. Conditions apply. Call 01347 833800 for an application form.

BIGGA REGIONAL TRAINING

BIGGA provide quality education and training courses at a minimum cost thanks to the support of Golden and Silver Key Members who contribute to the Education and Development Fund. Call 01347 833800.

DISCOUNTED WORKWEAR

BIGGA have teamed up with ARCO, the leading supplier of workwear, safety clothing and maintenance products to offer members 20%*discount off a choice of goods. Call 01482 611773.

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INSURANCE QUOTATION SERVICE

A quotation service is available to members on a wide range of insurance products. Call 01603 828255 and quote UniBG0306.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

When you join you are automatically given membership of one of the 27 sections around the country. As an active member you can attend golf days and other social events on a regular basis enabling you to network amongst others in the industry. Look at the 'Around the Green' section for contact details.

BIGGA WEBSITE - www.bigga.org.uk

Exclusive access to the Members area of the website. Interact with other greenkeepers on the bulletin board or check out the latest recruitment vacancies in the industry. For Greenkeepers and Student Members only.