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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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

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It goes without saying that ride on mowers, especially the cylinder models used on greens, tees, surrounds and fairways, must be well maintained and set up correctly to produce the optimum cut. This short article is a reminder of the basic checks and procedures necessary to maintain a machine that remains on cut from the beginning to the end of the season. James de Havilland reports

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

Cover picture courtesy of Ball Colegrave Ltd

Welcome



Woke up this morning to the news that Sir Steven Redgrave was looking for tall athletes to develop for the 2012 Olympics. You had to be over six foot three for a guy and five foot 11 for a girl and they were aimed at sports like rowing, handball and volleyball.

If I was 25 years younger right now I'd be distraught. I could have all the drive, determination and talent at my finger tips but just because I'm just under six foot - well, two and a quarter inches under, actually - I'd be passed over for some other beanpole in shorts. Doesn't seem right.

Surely everyone should be given tests, strength and agility and the like, and the best man or woman should be selected - otherwise it would be a bit sizeist. From memory one of the best Harlem Globetrotters, can't remember his name, was a short guy among all the giants. Under today's criteria he probably wouldn't be given the opportunity to represent the UK in the Olympics! But sport is going that way. Rugby Union used to be a game for all shapes and sizes with positions on the field to suit whatever physique but now scrum halves can be over six feet tall and a centre or wing three-quarter is now a similar size to a lock forward of 20 years ago.

Golf still seems to be immune from the sizeist agenda although it is changing. Ian Woosnam became Masters Champion and world number one despite failing to grow much more than five foot four. He was a big hitter in his prime but now struggles in the company of the golfing gym junkies who spend more time pumping iron and visiting the Tour's Physio Bus than yesterday's Tour pros spent selling Mars bars and giving lessons. But getting back to the must be over six foot three and five 11 business. In any other walk of life you wouldn't be able to do that - rule people out because of a physical impairment.

If I'd been told you needed to have under a 32 inch waist to become a journalist - I would have slipped in as a student but from the age of 23 it may/would have been a bit of a struggle and I'd have been lost to the writing game. Indeed there wouldn't be many left to fill the columns of the nation's newspapers.

Thinking back to the halls of Harrogate and you'll recall the variety of shapes and sizes that is welcomed into the greenkeeping game - we have tall ones, short ones, fat ones, somewhat fewer thin ones, ones with hair and those without - and that's exactly what life should be all about. It's not the packaging - it's what's inside.

As we all know life caters for all shapes and sizes and everyone has something to contribute and let's just hope that it's another five foot nine and three-quarterer who becomes a national hero in 2012.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

ENGINES DEVELOPED TO USE B20 BIODIESEL

As part of its commitment to environmental responsibility, JCB announced that from the start of 2007 all JCB Dieselmix engines have been approved for the use of B20 Biodiesel (20% Biofuel).

Dr. Tim Leverton, JCB Group Engineering Director, said "We are aware that there will be increasing pressure in the future from governments and from the public to use Biofuels in all on and off-road vehicles. Biofuels are a carbon neutral energy source which create lower emissions and are produced from renewable resources. At JCB this is one of a series of Group-wide initiatives aimed at reducing our environmental impact. We are evaluating the use of other Biofuels for future use."

175 YEARS OF MOWER MANUFACTURING

2007 sees a major milestone in the grounds care industry with Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd, celebrating the 175th anniversary of mower production at Ipswich.

Edwin Budding's historic lawnmower design was patented in 1830 and JR & A Ransome were the first company to obtain a licence to manufacture this remarkable invention. The first Ransomes-manufactured machine for domestic use was produced in 1832 and this signalled the beginning of commercial mower production in the UK.



Budding 1834

Although the company no longer produces domestic lawnmowers they are one of the leading commercial mower manufacturers supplying equipment to golf courses, local authorities, landscape contractors, sports clubs and major sports stadia around the globe. David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd commented,

"This is a hugely significant milestone in the history of our company; from this small beginning we are now one of the leading grounds care machinery manufacturers in the world. Ransomes mowers have been supplied to monarchies and nobilities across Europe and Asia and the Ransomes name has become a by-word for quality British engineering. Over the years the company has had its ups and downs, but today it is a vibrant market leader, with a modern manufacturing plant providing employment and career opportunities to the people of Ipswich."

AEA NEW CEO

The Agricultural Engineers Association is pleased to announce that Roger Lane-Nott will be the new CEO of the AEA from April 17, 2007. He will succeed Jake Vowles, the current Director General, who is retiring.

Roger spent 32 years in the Royal Navy, mainly in nuclear submarines, and retired in 1996 as a Rear Admiral. Since then he has been the FIA Formula One Race Director running all F1 activity worldwide and the CEO of the Centre for Marine and Petroleum Technology, a brokerage for innovative technology and collaborative research for the offshore oil and gas industry. More recently he has been the Secretary of the British Racing Drivers' Club at Silverstone.



Left: Jake Vowles, the present CEO and right: Roger Lane-Nott the new CEO.

75th ANNIVERSARY



The Macclesfield-based staff of Sisis Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd raise their glasses to celebrate the company's 75th anniversary, and to toast the future. Sisis pioneered mechanical aeration of sports fields and golf courses and the machine on the right of the photo is one of the earliest models, made in 1938. Above is the latest in a long line of Sisis innovations, the Aer-Aid air injection aerator.



Joint Managing Directors Roger and William Hargreaves get into the spirit of things!

NEW POWERPLAY GOLF FORMAT HAILED A SUCCESS

PowerPlay Golf – a shorter, more exciting way to enjoy golf – has been hailed a huge success at its worldwide launch, with some key figures in the sport claiming it could revolutionise the game.

Launched at Northwick Park by Playgolf plc, PowerPlay Golf uses two flags on each green and rewards golfers who take on the more difficult pin position – in essence a

bold bid to create golf's answer to Twenty20 cricket where aggressive and exciting play reaps dividends.

Some of golf's leading figures were among the first golfers in the world to test the nine-hole format at Northwick Park's revolutionary golf complex, which features replicas of famous holes from around the world.

PowerPlay Golf is played over a maximum of nine holes, with two flags in each green – one white, one black – with the black flag representing the more difficult pin position and a 'powerplay' scoring opportunity.

At the start of a hole, players nominate which flag they are aiming for and double their Stableford score on black flag holes provided they score a net birdie or better. Golfers must play three PowerPlay holes during the round, with an optional fourth 'powerplay' at a designated Par Three hole, which offers a special SuperPlay opportunity – a 30ft diameter circle around one black flag. A player can elect to go for the circle from the tee and if he successfully lands inside, he gains an additional 3 bonus points. But if he misses, he loses two points.

SEMINARS SET TO TACKLE TURF DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Scotts and Syngenta are joining forces to address all aspects of turf disease management at a series of special seminars during March.

Leading turf disease expert Dr Mike Agnew, technical manager at Syngenta USA, heads the line up of speakers. His presentation on the principles and strategies of turf disease management will be supported by papers from Scotts and Syngenta personnel, including Simon Barnaby, Syngenta Professional Products technical manager, who will cover new technologies.

Dates and venues for the seminars are as follows: Monday 19 March – Woodbury Park Hotel & Country Club, near Exeter; Tuesday 20 March – Ricoh Arena, Coventry; Wednesday 21 March – Oatridge College, near Edinburgh; Thursday 22 March – Huddersfield Golf Club (Fixby Hall), Huddersfield; Friday 23 March – Wentworth

Golf Club, Wentworth.

Full details are available by calling Sam Cassidy at Scotts on: 01473 201119 or visiting www.scottspromotional.co.uk

HAT-TRICK IN PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Barrie Lewis, an 18 year old Apprentice Greenkeeper from Bridgend in West Lothian, has been named Scottish



Landbased Learner of the Year by Lantra the sector skills council, making it the third year in a row that students from Oatridge College have picked up the prestigious title.

Barrie's success at an event at the Huntingtower Hotel in Perthshire follows that of last year's winner, 23 year old Farriery Apprentice Sarah Mary Brown, from Giffnock near Glasgow, and the 2005 victory of Colin Inglis, an Agriculture Apprentice from Aberdour in Fife.

Barrie Lewis has been in his present job as an Assistant Greenkeeper at Ratho Park GC near Edinburgh since last summer, where the Head Greenkeeper, Tom Murray, said: "His knowledge and enthusiasm are tremendous. He settled in very quickly and has not only made a lot of friends, but has been a huge help in training the younger greenkeepers. And while I think he is learning a lot from me, he is keeping me right up-to-date with everything he is learning at College."

The past year has been an exceptional one for Barrie. He was named Best SQA Level II Student at Oatridge College and picked up the Institute of Groundsmanship Edinburgh and Lothians Branch Cup. He reached the finals of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year award. Three days after his 18th birthday, Barrie became the youngest-ever champion at his local Bridgend Golf Club, and then he was selected to join the team of greenkeepers which looked after the Loch Lomond course, during the 2006 Scottish Open.

TOP PRIZE SCOOP

JCB has been named as the overall winner in the first-ever Best of British Industry Awards staged to honour the cream of the country's industrial companies.

JCB was unveiled as the Industrial Company of the Year at a special ceremony at the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, London, hosted by comedian Rory McGrath, and attended by top figures from the business community. Earlier in the evening JCB also collected the Industry Exporter of the Year Award.

Samir Brikho, chief executive of AMEC, the engineering and support services company that organised the awards in association with The Sunday Times and The Work Foundation, the research and consultancy organisation, said: "The Best of British Industry Awards were created to make a point – that industrial companies in Britain are dynamic and thriving. I am thrilled that the awards have made that point so forcefully. They have showcased industry moving forward with confidence in its future on the global business stage."



JCB Director Philip Bouverat (centre) receives the Industrial Company of the Year Award from (left) Jim Fitzpatrick, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment Relations, watched by the event's host, comedian Rory McGrath.

ROYAL WARRANT

Jubilee Seeds & Turf Ltd have been supplying a range of turves to the gardens at Buckingham Palace for a number of years and have been granted The Royal Warrant as Turf Suppliers to Her Majesty the Queen.

IN MEMORY

Life member Colin Stuart Murphy, or "Spud" as he was affectionately known, from TY'R Teleri, Parc Place, Maesygrwrtha, Abergavenny. Passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 28. Below is an extract taken from Peter Lacey's reading at the funeral, which was held on February 8.

"I first met Colin "Spud" Murphy in 1982 some 25 years ago, as a spotty 16 year old Apprentice Greenkeeper. Spud I seem to remember worked for Browns at the time and he used to call on my father Colin, the then Head Greenkeeper. He was an old boy to me even then, the wise old owl, the father figure of our industry, the one everyone new, loved and respected, but I hardly new him then! Colin was different from other reps though, for he had time to speak with everyone and time to tell a tale.

"We became better acquainted from 1992 when I became Head Greenkeeper and Secretary of the South Wales Section of BIGGA. Colin himself had always been a member and an active participant, for he could not just come along and do nothing, that wasn't Colin, he enjoyed collecting the cards or selling the raffle tickets, he just couldn't help himself. "He was a proud Section President of both the British Greenkeepers Association and later the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association, he led by example, an example that we'd all do well to remember!

"It would not be an understatement to say that Colin was a legend within our industry, for he is well known and respected throughout the country. He was an ambassador, a colleague, a friend and above all a gentleman. I like so many of you have fond memories but I shall miss him greatly, for he taught me so much without even knowing it! Thank you Col, we'll miss you!"

US COURSE CLOSURES OUTPACE OPENINGS

According to the National Golf Foundation, there was negative net growth in US golf facilities in 2006 for the first time in 60 years, as the number of courses that closed (146 18-hole equivalents) was greater than the number of openings (119.5).

In releasing the data, NGF said it was not an alarming occurrence but a confluence of events – openings returning to more normal levels and weaker facilities being culled. In the late 1980s, the number of openings was about 100 per year. There followed a wave of increased construction in the 1990s that peaked in 2000 with nearly 400 openings. Since then the wave has subsided to near historic levels.

The culling of courses is not viewed as a negative by NGF. The organisation expects overall course supply to stop expanding in the absence of increases in demand. It is primarily the weaker courses that are closing and, in many cases, owners who sell are profiting from long-term real estate appreciation. Finally, a better quality overall golf supply means a better quality experience for players.

THE PERFECT COURSE FOR DANISH GREENKEEPERS

Myerscough College recently presented a Danish student with the first qualification of its kind in Denmark for greenkeeping.

Antoine Challe, from Rungsted GC, in Denmark, studied the NVQ Level 2 in Sportsturf course online over two years. There are currently eight other Danish students on the program who are from six different golf courses and there has been interest from a number of other students from across Denmark in the course.

Two highly experienced Sportsturf Assessors from Myerscough College visit the students in Denmark every three months working from Rungsted GC in Denmark where the students complete training and theory work.

Fellow Danish student Jacob Aakjaer from Horsholm Golf Club has also recently completed the course and two more students are close to finishing the course, which will take the count to four completed.



Antoine Challe (left) receiving his certificate from Work-based Assessor Simon Dadge (right).

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NEW APPOINTMENT

With over 30 years' experience within the garden, agricultural and grounds care sales and service industry, Des McCulloch is ideally suited for his new role as Area Sales Manager with turf care machinery specialists Ultra Spreader International.

Des will have responsibility for the complete area of Scotland, Northumberland and Cumbria.

Previously, Des had been the grounds care manager for a large Scottish plant hire company, so he fully appreciates the demanding workload of modern turf professionals and the need for high work-rate yet simple equipment and machinery.



New Scottish Sales Manager for Ultra Spreader International, Des McCulloch at the recent BTME exhibition.

STRENGTHENING WELSH DEALER NETWORK

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd has strengthened its dealer network with the appointment David Evans Agricultural Ltd (DEAL) Turfcare as its main dealer in South Wales.

DEAL is based near Barry in Vale of Glamorgan and will market the complete Ransomes Jacobsen product range including E-Z-GO golf cars and turf utility vehicles, Turfco top dressers, Cushman utility trucks and Iseki tractors.

An established agricultural dealer retailing tractors, quad bikes and ATVs, they succeed RS Bird Ltd, who resigned as main dealers at the end of last year to concentrate on their growing E-Z-GO industrial business.

Adding to the end-user support in the region are Garems, a family-owned company established in 1986 and based in Llanelli, who have been appointed as Lawn & Garden and non-exclusive Iseki dealers for the South Wales area.

SALES APPOINTMENTS

Yorkshire Horticultural Supplies are pleased to announce two new appointments to the sales team. Stewart Jeffs joins the team as Southern Sales Manager and Alan Dyson as Northern Sales Manager.

Both gentlemen will be advising on a full range of turf maintenance programmes for football, golf, bowls and cricket clubs and general turf maintenance and both Stewart and Alan have been in the industry for 20 years and have worked for leading companies.

Stewart can be contacted on: 07920 265078 and Alan on: 07764 143680.



Alan Dyson



Stewart Jeffs



Photo: Robert Adcock

CHAIRMAN FOR THE TGA

Robert Adcock, of Somergreen Turf, took over the Chairmanship of the Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA) when members gathered in Bath for its Annual General Meeting recently. He farms 90 acres of cultivated lawn turf on the foothills of the picturesque Quantock Hills in Somerset and also undertakes soft landscaping works and garden maintenance in the South West of England. Robert has been a TGA member since its inception in 1997 and has taken an active role on the Council for most of that time.

SEMINAR DATES

Direct Contact Exhibitions (DCE) travels to all corners of the UK and Ireland with CPD Seminar presentations.

2007 sees Technical Surfaces yet again team up with DCE to provide the resources and speakers for the 'Parks & Play' section of the seminars.

This approach not only satisfies architects, engineers, buyers, specifiers, and influential decision makers but also provides manufacturers and suppliers with opportunities to project their technical message to groups of interested attendees at any given venue.

In light of the rising number of personal injury claims as a direct result of poorly maintained synthetic surfaces, facility managers, local authorities and grounds managers are now fully aware of the need for proper maintenance and advice – this is where these types of 'local' seminars have become a must attend event.

Seven one-day seminars will be held at the following venues during the year:
February 28: Apollo Hotel, Basingstoke;
April 24: Novotel, York; May 16: Arden Hotel, Birmingham; July 3: Hilton Hotel, Isle of Mann; October 16: Holiday Inn, Ipswich; October 17: Palms Hotel, Hornchurch; October 18: Goffs Park, Crawley.

For further details please contact Technical Surfaces' National Office on: 08702 400 700 or visit: www.technicalsurfaces.co.uk

SUDS TRAINING IN IRELAND

In Ireland, growing implementation of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) has been evident in recent years. Concerns about climate change, flood risk management and the need to positively respond to the impending Water Framework Directive has driven organisations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in their up-take of SUDS. Also, The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study places a clear requirement for the implementation of SUDS in new development CIRIA, in association with Engineers Ireland has announced a two-day training workshop (the second in a series of three modules) sponsored by Acheson Glover, Galco Steel and Wallingford Software - Designing SUDS - to be held in Dublin on 29-30 March 2007, to help organisations in Ireland prepare for the challenges ahead. For further information visit: www.ciria.org/workshops.htm or tel: 020 7549 3300.

ON THE ROAD

DLF Trifolium has organised a series of seminars titled "Practical Sustainability" to help turf managers achieve a quality, sustainable turf surface. The seminars demonstrate the benefits and use of more frequent overseeding within any prudent turf management programme.

The events will cover all aspects including: Why oversow and which grass? - Derek Smith, DLF Trifolium; Creating a receptive rootzone - Martin Ward, Symbio; Effective overseeding (practical) - Keith Kensett, R & K Kensett; Primo Maxx - Simon Barnaby, Syngenta; Managing for a quality sward - Andy Cole, PSD agronomy/Henry Bechelet, STRI.

The venues include: Belton Woods Golf Club, Grantham, Lincolnshire - March 28; Pedham Place Golf Club, Swanley, Kent - April 17; STRI, Bingley, West Yorkshire - April 19.

Please contact Bev Underwood on the details below if you are interested in attending.

For further information visit:
www.dlf.co.uk/amenity

BENEFIT GOLF DAY

There will be a Benefit Day in aid of Stuart Bridge at Withington GC (where Stuart is Head Greenkeeper) on Tuesday, March 20 from 10.30am.

On his way to work at the end of last year, Stuart was knocked off his motorbike and seriously injured. Join others for a round of golf in a friendly atmosphere, with hot food afterwards and the chance to win prizes. Money raised will go to Stuart and his family to help them through this difficult time.

To donate or enter the Stabledford 4 Ball Competition (£25 per person) contact: Sid Pugh on: 07811522758, Alec Davies on: 07747608049 or Henry Royle on: 07850698136.

NEW GOLF WEBSITE

www.pgagolfmagazine.co.uk

The Golf Pages is now PGA Golf Magazine, and to celebrate the rebranding they have launched a new website. Here you will be able to catch up on the latest equipment reviews, post in to one of their many forums, search for PGA Pros and Courses in your area and even leave your own comments on your local courses.

ENDORSEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SWM Golf Management is currently looking for Sponsors for the 2007 Golf Season. They are looking for the likes of Club, Hotel or Business 'attachments' for individual players to endorse and promote sponsors' products/services. This can be via attachment, clothing sponsorship, professional golf bag sponsorship/advertising, car sponsorship, headwear/advertising sponsorship etc. The players participate on the various professional golf tours i.e. European, Challenge, Asian, Tour de las Americas, US Tightlies, UK Europrotour Pro Circuit etc. Each event on the UK Pro Circuit (www.europrotour.com) is played over three days on a 54 holes strokeplay competition basis, with the top 50 plus ties going through to the 3rd and final round. Every tournament carries a minimum prize fund of £40,000, and the season will culminate in the Tour Championship with the top 50 players from the Order of Merit.

Any party interested in providing sponsorship on an individual or team basis, should contact: graham@swmgolfmanagement.com for further details.

CELEBRITY SUPPORTERS GATHER

The Bobby Moore Fund for Cancer Research UK is hosting another of its successful celebrity golf days, sponsored by Citigroup, on Wednesday, May 2 at the luxurious Wentworth Club, Surrey, to raise vital funds for research into bowel cancer.

The action will take place on the esteemed 'West' course, familiar to millions worldwide through the annual PGA and World Match Play Championships.

Last year, the event raised over £100,000 for bowel cancer research and celebrity participants included Jamie Redknapp, Steve Davis MBE, Will Carling MBE and David Seaman MBE among others.

Cancer Research UK, in partnership with Stephanie Moore MBE, established the Bobby Moore Fund in 1993 following Bobby's death from bowel cancer in the same year. The Fund raises money for research into bowel cancer and awareness about the disease. Bowel cancer is a curable disease if caught early, yet it still claims 45 lives every day in the UK. In the 16 years since Bobby died, the Fund has raised over £6 million for bowel cancer research. 27 teams will start the day with a hot breakfast before commencing 18 holes of golf. This will be followed by a champagne reception, three-course dinner and an auction of exclusive sporting memorabilia.

To enter a team for the Golf Day, call Margaret Rose or Alex Warner Smith on: 0207 009 8881 or visit: www.bobbymoorefund.org for more information.

PGA AGREEMENT GOES STATESIDE



David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen, at the signing of the UK agreement at the British Open last year.

Jacobsen, the US sister company of Ransomes Jacobsen in the UK, has reached a 10-year agreement with The PGA of America to serve as the Official turf equipment supplier to The PGA of America and Exclusive turf equipment supplier to PGA Golf Properties.

This follows the signing of a similar arrangement in the UK last year which saw The Professional Golfers' Association sign a three-year agreement with Ransomes Jacobsen, where the Ipswich-based turf equipment manufacturer became the Official supplier of turf care equipment to the PGA.



SUCCESSFUL SKILLS TRAINING

In this month's article David Golding, GTC's Education Director, appeals to Course Managers to play the key role in staff training and assessment.

"Here he goes again" I hear regular readers say – "NVQ's and what we should be doing!"

Well that might well be the case but I would like to just take a few minutes of your time to ask who is best placed to know the staffs' training needs, how best they would learn and how the employer would best benefit from staff development?

Is it the College Lecturer? The Secretary Manager? Chairman of Green? Professional? The Owner?

While all of these people can contribute to the process of staff development it has to be the Course Manager's responsibility, otherwise the system of skills training cannot be successful.

Just to be a little controversial, you will note I have appealed to Course Managers and not mentioned Head Greenkeepers.

I am well aware that many Head Greenkeepers are managing the golf course but more and more employers contact me regarding their Head Greenkeepers and how they only maintain the course but do not manage the facility.

Yes, believe it or not many employers do really want their Head "men" to supervise and manage, and become increasingly disappointed when they don't carry out these important tasks.

This is often the area where Head Greenkeepers become frustrated because they still hear statements such as the "Secretary or the Chairman of Green keep interfering with my job". In my experience it is not interference so much as typical management duties which should be carried out by the Course Manager.

Clearly the key word in the title debate is MANAGE and most of us entering the greenkeeping profession were not born managers, we just wanted to work outdoors and loved the challenge of working with nature.

Not for the first time I will put myself forward as a typical guy who fitted the above criteria and that is why I feel so strongly about supporting those of you who do want to

develop into Golf Course Managers.

As the game of golf is now in a period of change with more and more clubs under tremendous financial pressures, the Course Manager will truly need to be up for the challenges ahead. They will need to be at the table when key issues are under discussion with management and their professionalism, hopefully, will be fundamental when the future of the course and club are being decided. Financial planning, including staffing resources, will be high on the agenda and you will have a major contribution to the make to the discussions.

Today's modern Course Managers are well versed in these matters and I won't name names but I noted some of our top Course Managers were in workshops during the Harrogate Week topping up on their management skills - brilliant! So much so that I know they were keen to discuss speaker skills and programmes with Ken and Sami, all with the intention of ensuring that future training in this crucial area is of a high quality.

We know the tried and tested Frank Newberry and Brin Bendon, who continue to support so many of you, as management trainers who have taken the time to understand the sectors needs and I am sure there are other individuals who will serve us well but I have little time for trainers who just deliver generic courses and wonder why the delegates switch off!

We know this has been the case in our own assessor training programmes of late and this will be addressed due to direct feedback from the delegates to us. The GTC will be working very closely with BIGGA and the Home Union Golf Course committees to ensure we not only provide the subjects on seminars and workshops but also top speakers.

My guess is that you will see many more of our "top" Course Managers becoming the tutors at future workshops because one thing is for sure, this industry is not frightened to share their experiences and we must encourage this.

There is no better tutor than the one who has and often still is "at the coalface!" When you see these Course Managers offering to share their experience and knowledge with you, take up the opportunity, don't just say "oh it's alright for him he is at a course with a mega-budget", it is often these types of courses which will feel the financial pressure first!

Whether it is by contacting your favoured training provider or BIGGA direct, please do

not sit back with just your greenkeeping skills. Discuss the courses available to "convert" to a Golf Course MANAGER. Trust me, employers need you!

The association and the GTC approved training providers will supply the demand on a local basis and it need not be a course which is a full qualification e.g. N/SVQ Level 4 but short specific courses or bite size learning is the way forward.

Courses aimed at supplying employers with the skilled staff they require, and the GTC for its part, will continue to support this aim by arranging trainer and assessor training to keep you at the front-line of your teams skills development.

There will be many of you who have over the years achieved the assessor award and feel the GTC has not been in touch with you regarding updating or attending a standardisation/moderation meeting? If I can explain – the GTC, since the introduction of vocational or work-based training has invested heavily in assessor training believing that the best placed person to train and assess greenkeepers are Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, or in certain circumstances Deputies, and this programme of training has been designed to assist Centres/Training Providers with the assessment process.

When you decide on your Centre to register your trainee you should automatically become an assessor within their quality control (verification) system. It is therefore the Centres responsibility to keep you updated on quality issues as well as the obvious task to ensure you are training and assessing your staff to the national standards.

Some Centres are still by-passing qualified assessors and using their own peripatetic assessors when really they should be visiting you as the Internal Verifier not assessor.

Don't settle for this, especially when you are the 'MANAGER'.

The Awarding Bodies External Verifiers are onto these Centres and we at the GTC are continually trying to drive up the quality of work-based training by supporting Centres through regular contact with verifiers and the Awarding Bodies.

This role is just part of the Course Managers role and I truly hope you are prepared for the demanding times ahead, if not take advantage of the courses available.

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