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INTERNATIONAL

September 2007

Regulars



4–9

News

10

GTC

11

Education

As he enters his final month as an employee of BIGGA before retirement, Ken Richardson looks back over the past 14 years

12

Membership

13

Hobbies

14–15

Continue to Learn



Golf Course Presentation

By Stewart Brown

51

What's Your Number?

52

In the Shed

Greenkeeper International's puzzle page

58

News from the Chief Executive

58–65

Around the Green

66

Letters

74

As I See It...

National Chairman Billy McMillan's monthly column



Features

16–17

The History and Myths of Trees

By John Nicholson

19–20

Fencing and Netting: Health and Safety

By Bill Lawlor

21

Climate Change

Mike Beardall reports

22–24

A Lifetime in Greenkeeping

Scott MacCallum travelled to Bristol to meet Past Chairman, Ivor Scoones, on the eve of his retirement

26–27

Draining Heavy Land Courses

29–31

Utility Vehicles: Side by side vehicles for use over the rough stuff

By James de Havilland

33–39

Security Supplement: Are You Sure You're Secure?

Melissa Toombs investigates greenkeeping theft and offers advice on golf club security

41–42

Chris & Mike's US Open Adventure

45–50

Integrated Disease Management of Turfgrass - The Theory

Dr Kate Entwistle

53–54

Toro Student of the Year 2007 Preview

56–57

Cuts Both Ways

Ten US superintendents travelled to Harrogate and were blown away by their experiences of greenkeeping in the UK



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Welcome



Backbone over Raw Talent

I've just returned from my annual fortnight's holiday – two weeks of melting in Florida's near 100 degree heat and stalking Mickey Mouse, Scooby Doo and Goofy in the theme parks – and am now hopefully refreshed and ready to push the pedal to the metal on life's accelerator once again.

So what has gone on while I was away? Well, there was a Foot and Mouth scare in the UK, a stock market crash worldwide and Tiger Woods won another Major – no doubt the most predictable of all. I'm not one of those people who feels short changed that one man is so dominant. I always support Tiger and, indeed, Roger Federer as we are very privileged to be around at a time when we can enjoy watching the best ply their trade. The one disappointment, in golf, has been that no-one has stepped up to the plate (you can tell I've been in the States) and offered Tiger serious competition. We've had David Duval, Ernie Els, Phil Mickelson all supply hints of a Palmer-Nicklaus; type rivalry but they have fallen short. It's therefore interesting to learn that while Tiger is head and shoulders above the rest he is still the one who spends most time in the gym.

It's the old thing - talent and application. We can all remember people at school who seemed to have it all but now do dead end jobs. It's a great example to everyone who has been in awe of the guy at the top of the class. If you work hard there is a fair chance you'll get further. It's strange to say it but a bit of backbone and a dose of application is a far greater gift than natural talent.

If you want a prime example of someone in golf with talent but no application you should look no further than John Daly. He spent the week of the US PGA not practising at Southern Hills, but at a Casino nearby playing the slots and when he did decide to practice he was given access to the Casino's own course for the day. His talent saw him to a great opening round but his lack of application meant he fell away. You've as much chance seeing Big John in a gym as you have of catching him eating a salad. It's when you get the rare combination of talent and application that you get real champions like Tiger and Roger and they deserve all the plaudits that come their way.

Another thing that happened while on holiday was that I had my 45th birthday.

When I was 35 it dawned on me that 15 years before I'd been 20 and that 15 years from then I'd be 50. It was a sobering thought but now here I am a mere five years away from being eligible to go on SAGA holidays!

But as I've said many times getting old is better than the alternative.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

THE BIGGA/GCMA SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The BIGGA/GCMA Safety Management System has been available to members of BIGGA and to members of the GCMA since the beginning of July. Since then, more than 100 golf clubs have signed up to use the system and the website has seen more than 500 hits.

Taking Health and Safety seriously is important for a number of reasons and it can help you to manage your golf clubs and manage your staff better. Moreover, as Environmental Health Inspectors target more and more golf clubs, good health and safety practice can save you money. A recent court case found a golf club guilty of not performing adequate risk assessments and of not giving adequate training and assessment to staff that had led to a member of staff being injured. They were fined £38,500 for what the judge called a serious breach of health and safety law.

Can you afford to ignore health and safety law?

Members of BIGGA should go to the Association website: www.bigga.org.uk and go to the member's area where they can use their name and membership number to log in as a member. Click on SMS Website then Click on Click here to visit the site. Enter the site and you will be taken to the BIGGA/GCMA Recommended Safety Management System page. Click on the docs/links tab and click on the SMS User Instruction button. The User Instructions will be downloaded into your computer's Word Processor and you can print the Instructions for later reference. You can now use the SMS to generate a policy document and to produce an organisation document for your club before attempting to use the Risk Profiles and Risk Assessments. You need to register your club's name and an e-mail address to gain access to them. Once you have completed your Risk Assessments and amended your Risk Profiles, you can produce your health and safety plan. This can be followed by the production of your Audit policy and a policy for reviewing your SMS.

The SMS site has been produced to make it as easy as possible for you to implement your SMS but if you need assistance and/or you do not have a competent person, contact Xact Consulting on: 0845 665 3006.

HEADQUARTERS EXPANSION

Rolawn have announced a major expansion of their headquarters near York.

Rolawn have continued to enjoy strong annual growth in turnover and to support their expansion plans in the UK market Rolawn have recently announced they are extending the size of their current headquarters by over 60% with work starting shortly.

Paul Dawson, Rolawn's Managing Director commented, "Our expanded headquarters marks an important stage in our development; it is a further illustration of our commitment to increasing our market share of both the UK turf and topsoil markets. With our existing range of products and with more on the way we are confident about continued growth."

NEW ROLE

Alan Pierce, 27, has been appointed Course Manager at Ham Manor Golf Club in West Sussex. Alan has been a greenkeeper for 13 years, starting his career at Wellshurst GC, then moving onto Chartham Park GC before becoming Deputy at Royal Eastbourne GC.



Alan Pierce (left) and Robin Stace, Ham Manor GC's Chairman of Green

Alan, who was Toro Student of the Year in 2005, said: "I was promoted to Course Manager in May 2007 and have just had confirmation that it is permanent! I think it shows how valuable the training at the University of Massachusetts is to previous and future winners of the Toro Student of the Year Award. It has certainly given me much valuable knowledge and confidence in my own abilities. A great prize, thoroughly worthwhile. Lets hope that Toro continue to sponsor it for many years to come."

ARCHITECTS MOVE FORWARD WITH EDUCATION

The 15 students of the European Institute of Golf Course Architects are presently moving to their final seminar, in St. Andrews, of their two year Professional Diploma Course before their graduation into the Institute.

They will complete their studies this September and take back to their 12 countries a unique qualification in their entry into the profession of golf course design.

They will be succeeded by 17 new students from as far afield as USA, Argentina, South Africa, Canada – in total 13 nations – who will begin their Diploma Course in Surrey in September. Thereafter, in their two year programme, they will spend time in Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Scotland as well as with EIGCA member practices in their professional education.

SOUTH WEST GMT

The South West Golf Management Trophy was held at Trefloyne Golf Club near Tenby recently, with Scotts sponsoring the day and an entry of 14 teams. The winning team (as seen below) was Pyle and Kenfig GC, in second place was Garnant Park GC and Trefloyne GC, who were last year's winners, came third.



THE OPEN AND SHUT CHOICE FOR CARNOUSTIE

As the golf world hails a new champion of The Open at Carnoustie, a brand new digital version of the world-famous links course north of Dundee has been produced, to encourage the next generation of golfers!

Golf simulation engineers Sports Coach Systems were commissioned to digitise the Championship Course after Carnoustie's Golf Services Manager, Colin McLeod, saw the simulators at the PGA Show in Orlando last January.

Part of the club's commitment to the local community is to provide free tuition to children from Carnoustie, so this is a very packed programme indeed. At the moment, the club has a practice ground but it's located about a mile from the first tee.

As junior coaching continues all through the winter, the intention is to construct a new state-of-the-art facility about 30 yards from the first tee. It is here that two secure bays are earmarked to house the simulators, allowing juniors to play the course and undergo analysis whatever the weather or time of day.

AWARDED CPD

BIGGA has recognised Rolawn, Europe's largest turf grower, as a contributor to their members Continuing Professional Development (CPD) educational programme.

Following attendance at one of Rolawn's training field days, BIGGA members will be awarded three CPD credits. During the training day, the primary topic areas covered will be the cultivation process for greens, tees and general turf, the link between a turf grower and a golf course, cultivar selection, turf harvesting and the importance of growing turf to meet the principles of sustainability.



Cedric McMillan, Rolawn's Sales & Marketing Director commented, "BIGGA strives, through education and training to set and maintain standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the Greenkeeping profession and we are delighted to participate in the Continuing Professional Development Scheme."

NORTH WEST BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Leading hire company, A-Plant, has been declared North West Business of the Year at the UK's 'Business Oscars.' A-Plant picked up the coveted Badenoch & Clark Business of the Year title at the National Business Awards North West Regional Final 2007 hosted in Manchester.

In a remarkable run of success, A-Plant - which has its headquarters in Warrington, Cheshire, and hires out Plant, Tools and Specialist Equipment from over 200 depots nationwide - also triumphed in the Cable & Wireless Award for Customer Focus for the second-year running. The company was declared a finalist in the Orange Best Use of Technology in Business Award and was highly commended for both the Corporate Social Responsibility Award and the City & Guilds Employer of the Year Award.



A-Plant's Marketing Director, Asif Latief

The National Business Awards are the highest accolade that British businesses can aspire to achieve and have been described by Prime Minister Gordon Brown as the UK's 'Business Oscars', A-Plant automatically goes through to the National Business Awards final hosted in London in November. Winners can then go on to the European Business Awards 2008 in Paris.

VIDEO WEBSITE FOR DR PRODUCTS

Rochford GM, the sole UK distributors for the American manufactured DR range of outdoor power equipment, has launched a new consumer website where prospective buyers can see the machines being used with a running commentary, by simply logging on to www.drproducts.co.uk and following the simple on-line instructions. The new website features four DR products in use as well as a dealer locator, downloads for manuals and a list of accessories and contacts.

For further information visit: www.drproducts.co.uk



The DR Power Wagon

KEEP YOUR SPRAYING UP TO SCRATCH

It is important to keep up to date with legislation and regulations surrounding the use of pesticides as well as ensuring all spraying equipment used is up to scratch.

The National Register of Sprayer Operators (NRoSO) was formed in 2003 as part of the Voluntary Initiative (VI) within land based industries. Its aim was to prove safe and responsible use of pesticides.

The NRoSO scheme was developed to help demonstrate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – such as update training, seminars and conferences – in a way that farmers, greenkeepers and other sprayer operators could understand and use.

Changing the behaviour of pesticide users is a central pillar of the VI and this is frequently facilitated by training. NRoSO is a "professional

register" designed around CPD and training, thus helping to raise standards for all sprayer operators and advisors.

Training helps to provide a better understanding of application of sprays, a better understanding of the environmental effects of crop protection, and to ensure that they are used safely and effectively. Pesticides are powerful tools and can be used to great benefit, but misuse can have devastating effects. Training gives the confidence to all concerned that their use will be to best effect.

The public who have access to golf courses probably has little understanding of the products you use, and tend to have a negative view towards any form of pesticide treatment. Being a member of NRoSO will be a useful message for golfers and other members of the public to prove your professionalism in showing that you are taking your duties as a sprayer operator responsibly, and are sufficiently interested in the effects of the products you use to keep up to date and to continue to develop your skills.

The VI is now in its sixth year and has continued to meet or exceed the targets set for it. NRoSO membership was part of the VI plan, but has developed a real purpose of its own in helping sprayer operators access the sort of training that is relevant to their needs. It has enabled sprayer operators to share best practice and improve their skills. The current focus is on the latest thinking on water protection and covers advice on filling and handling practices and managing soils to prevent run off. Simple improvements in practices can have dramatic improvements on the residues found in water courses.



All sprayer operators on a golf course have a duty of care to the public on their courses, and to the environment that they work in. Being an NRoSO member and accessing CPD training represents a responsible way forward for the industry.

And whether you have your own sprayer or

News



engage contractors, you need to be aware of the National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS).

There has been much discussion around the relevance of the NSTS in the golf course and amenity sectors. Why should small machines need to be tested when they are not by their nature large appliers of pesticide?

“But look at it another way,” said NSTS manager, Duncan Russell. “All machines – no matter what size or how much pesticide is applied – need to make that application accurately and safely for both the environment and the operator.”

“The NSTS test achieves exactly that – an independent person looking at the sprayer to make sure it is in good working condition and capable of applying pesticides correctly. All the more important when the machine is working in very public environments such as golf courses and amenity parks.”

This annual test has many benefits:

- It confirms that the machine is kept in good working condition and is unlikely to fail or break down when carrying out an important spraying operation.
- The machine is working correctly and capable, when operated by a qualified operator, of applying the correct dose of pesticide on target.
- It confirms the machine is safe to use from the operator’s perspective, helps confirm the requirements of Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) and confirms a general duty of care to members and public alike.
- It will reduce the need for potentially expensive emergency call outs by the service engineer should the sprayer fail during a spraying operation.
- A sprayer kept in good condition is likely to be worth more as a trade-in against a new updated machine.
- It helps confirm that the sprayer owners are supporting the aims of the VI in reducing the impact of pesticides on the environment and gives notice of a professional and responsible attitude to pesticide application.

The NSTS has been testing liquid application machinery since 1 January 2003 and to date has carried out more than 32,000 tests. The scheme is part of the VI which has delivered genuine environmental benefits.

It has a nationwide network of qualified machine examiners who have the necessary specialist equipment to test a machine to the standards required. A list of these examiners is available from the NSTS website where machine owners can choose their nearest or preferred sprayer examiner.

Also available from the website is a check-sheet which can be used by machine owners and operators to pre-check their sprayers before submitting them for independent examination. This check-sheet can also be used for regular maintenance and mid season checks.

The NSTS is available for all forms of liquid application from specialist self propelled golf course machines through small mounted sprayers to barrow sprayers and knapsacks. All can be tested within the scheme and will benefit from this regular checking system.



Call to discuss your requirements: 01883 344244

Email: info@eagle.uk.com Website: www.eagle.uk.com



PARTNERSHIP FORMED

Having healthy turf to play sports on is important to any Sports Surface Manager. But today, with the pressures of televised events it must also look good. To give future Sports Surface Managers an insight into what actually goes on throughout the year in a high profile stadium Askham Bryan College have formed a partnership with Leeds Rugby Ltd.

ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE

This partnership will initially allow National Diploma Horticulture students on the Turf Production and Maintenance module to carry out turf maintenance operations on the playing pitch at Headingley. The premise stands that for half of the college year half of the group will be on the pitch and the other half in the classroom and then vice versa. The students will attend classes at Headingley on alternate weeks, whilst at college they will be able to apply the same methods on the college playing surface.

This should work out to be a fantastic opportunity for both parties, seeing at Headingley not only a Rugby Academy but also a Sports Surface Managers Academy.

*Dan Prest
Course Tutor, National Diploma Horticulture*

CONFERENCE RETURNS TO AMSTERDAM

The European Golf Business Conference will return to Amsterdam in November.

Hosted by the European Golf Course Owners Association (EGCOA), the 2007 conference is at the Renaissance Hotel from November 28-30.

Specialists from across the world will offer their thoughts and insight on the development of golf across nine sessions.

The conference is aimed at golf course owners, managers, directors of golf, suppliers, representatives or professional bodies, suppliers, golf course architects and industry partners.

For more information visit: www.egcoa.org/congres2007

UFO AT PURLEY DOWNS GC

Thursday started as normal, the Course Manager checking the clock as we appeared for work. Sitting round the table in the rest room in our temporary accommodation about 6.40am, I happened to glance out of the window and saw a balloon; on looking again it was a gigantic hot air balloon, slowly coming into land on our 8th fairway, a short par 3. We were all amazed at the spectacle unfolding before us!

As I approached the gondola, the pilot asked if it would be okay to land; as if I could say no, I said that he could land but the balloon would be deemed a 'moveable obstruction' should a golfer appear on the tee, this went clearly 'over his head' as did the balloon! I then jumped out of my skin as all at once 10 passengers appeared over the gondola's basket top viewing the scene. The pilot manoeuvred the balloon, assisted by two occupants pulling on guy ropes, to the 9th fairway to allow more room to lower it. Once stabilised the occupants disembarked and there followed a frenzied 20 minutes of collapsing the balloon, rolling it up and eventually stowing it away on the support vehicle and trailer (that had conveniently been harboured up outside the golf course).

Pictures were taken by the passengers, champagne quaffed, with lots of smiling faces at what they had all achieved. We then started the day's work...

Should anyone wish to take a trip in a hot air balloon in the South East of England please visit www.adventureballoons.co.uk

John Barnes, Greenkeeper



BRITISH BLIND OPEN 2007

The English Blind Golf Association recently hosted the 2007 British Blind Open Golf Championships, at Fulford Golf Club, York.

2007 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of a blind golf association in England, previously known as the Visually Handicapped Golfers Association (London and South East Region).

York remained dry and sunny for the event, which lasted three days and consisted of a 36-hole medal played over two days for the Championship, and a Pro/Celeb/Am and Try Golf event on day one for the visually impaired children from the Yorkshire area.

So how is it done? The sighted caddie or guide acts as the blind golfer's eyes, giving verbal information about distance, direction and the characteristics of each hole. Then it is down to the accuracy of the golfer's swing. Blind golfers use the same equipment, same balls and play to R&A Rules, with the one exception that they are allowed to ground the club in hazard.

"I think the hotel looked after us spectacularly, Fulford Golf Club was hugely supportive, the course was in fantastic condition and god looked after the weather. We've received nothing but praise from everyone at the event and this year's Champion was a true Champion finishing 12 under par," said Malcolm Elrick, an EBGA Director and Public Relations Person.



Try Golf Event, L to R: John Scappaticci; Malcolm Elrick; John's Guide and wife, Jo Scappatacci; Malcolm's Guide and wife, Lesley Elrick; Fulford Club Captain, Mike Onyett; Ex-England Cricketer, Brian Close

Results: The overall winner was S. Smyth with a nett score of 132; second was M. Mayo with 143 and third N. Baxter with 144; Z. Sharon won best gross in the B1 category with 219; A. Sellars won best gross in the B2 category with 180 and M. Mayo won best gross in the B3 category with 173.

For more information visit: www.blindgolf.co.uk

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL SEMINAR

Final arrangements are now being made for the South East Regional Seminar to be held at Hadlow College, Kent on Tuesday, October 30.

The theme for this year's Seminar will be 'The Changing Climate' as in the Environment, Weather, Our Association, Finance, Equipment, etc.

Speakers so will include: John Pemberton BIGGA, Ian Lacy IOG, Steve Isaacs R&A,

Jason Lock Better Golf Centre, Laurence Pithie

MG Crown Golf, and a Groundsman from a leading County Cricket Club.

The cost for the day will be £15 this includes coffee/tea on arrival and a hot meal at lunch time.

More details will be published in the next edition of Greenkeeper International or for more information, contact Clive Osgood the South East Region Administrator on: 01737 819343.

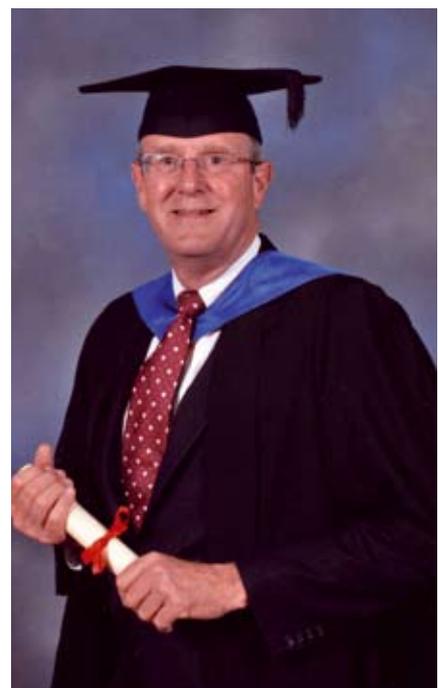
IOG MEMBERS AWARDED MASTERS DEGREES

Three members of the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) have graduated with Master of Science (MSc) Sports Surface Technology degrees from Cranfield University.

Martin Ford, Alan Lewis and Ian Norman have all achieved their MSc degrees on a part-time basis, after undertaking modules plus completing a research project.

Based in Somerset, IOG/ECB Fine Turf Project Manager Martin Ford, formerly IOG treasurer, is a Royal Horticultural Society Master of Horticulture and he graduated from Cranfield sharing the Turtrax prize for the Best Student with Kathryn Severn, who is now at Loughborough University carrying out research into synthetic pitches.

Alan Lewis is a Senior IOG Instructor in Shropshire and is Technical Director of TTS, and Ian Norman is based in Sussex. Both are longstanding members of the IOG as well as being qualified and experienced IOG Training Instructors and Consultants. Commenting, Martin Ford said: "I don't just regard my MSc as a personal achievement; it is also a reflection of how the industry is recognising post-graduate level qualifications both in the UK and European Community."





WHY SO CRITICAL?

In this month's article David Golding, GTC's Education Director, looks to dispel the myth that "the GTC wants every greenkeeper registered on an NVQ." He also looks at why there are still some very influential "turf related" individuals who seem to spend most of their lives criticising vocational training

Ignorance by dictionary definition is "a lack of knowledge" and I could add that this is the perception of many VQ sceptics as they think N/SVQ's are all about doing the job, somebody, could be anybody, ticking a few boxes and bingo give the student a piece of paper and there is no knowledge requirement whatsoever!

Sorry, but before I set off again explaining how many more competent qualified assessors are now at the forefront of formally training and assessing their staff in their normal working environment, I really need to explain the GTC's stance on greenkeeper education, training and qualifications.

The GTC looks to have a range of both work-based and academic qualifications available for turf students and employers to access.

Access to these qualifications is through a network of GTC Approved Training providers who are encouraged to devise a range of delivery options to suit the needs of all employers/students e.g. part-time, full-time off the job courses or on the job learning through workbooks or on-line learning.

Whether the knowledge is gained on or off the job, the support of the Course Manager/assessor is vital when it comes to skills and the assessment of competence is always most cost-effective and efficient when carried out by the learners supervisor under normal working conditions.

Skills training, without doubt, is best delivered on the job, however there are still specialist training requirements, such as legislative certificates which can be best suited to group training at a central site e.g. provider centre, college or golf club.

The GTC therefore works with all the key bodies, organisations and providers to ensure that the sector has as small a range of certificates and qualifications available which are delivered to a national standard, based on quality and applicable to the turf industry.

The range of turf qualifications does not stop at the N/SVQ's, albeit in excess of 90% of turf student registrations are on work-based qualifications!

There are the more academic National Certificate/Diploma qualifications, which can lead students onto the higher education qualifications such as Higher National Certificates/Diplomas and Foundation and Master Degree qualifications.

The GTC is involved in the development and review of all of these qualifications and fully supports and endorses them!

All these qualifications are developed within the Governments national

framework and attract varying levels of funding support, making courses more attractive to employers.

The qualifications often are included within schemes promoted by the Government such as the Apprenticeship Scheme or Train 2 Gain.

Given that the GTC's Provider network are now really wanting to meet the industries needs, you need to discuss the various qualifications and delivery methods as well as costs with either your favoured provider, or for independent advice, contact the GTC direct.

The GTC is looking to launch a new facility on its website which does not just link you to the list of GTC Approved Training Providers but through a sub section list, the specific turf qualifications and courses each provider offers. We appreciate just how difficult it can be when clicking on a provider to actually find the turf courses. Often hidden within Horticulture or in the case of large colleges, well hidden for even us to find. Fiona from the GTC, is on the case and we hope to take the pain out of seeking which course or qualification by having the information available on the GTC website shortly.

As for the VQ sceptics, well I don't intend to name them but I will say that the responsible providers are now fully supporting Course Managers and in particular qualified assessors to drive the skills training of greenkeepers forward. This has been acknowledged more and more by employers recognising a more motivated, competent member of staff deserves financial reward and in many cases promotion when the position arises – succession planning!

Well done to all those on the job trainers/assessors, who are now driving up the skills of their staff in association with their chosen provider and to those employers who fully understand the true meaning and benefits of vocational training and as a result have a competent workforce.

To discuss the range of turf qualifications and courses contact David direct on email david@the-gtc.co.uk or Tel 01347 838640.

The GTC's website is: www.the-gtc.co.uk

GTC is supported by:

