BIGGA survey: An excellent response

As this edition of Greenkeeper International goes to press, Mike Williamson of MW Associates is busy analysing the responses to the market research survey we reported on in March.

"The response to the survey has been excellent," said Mike.

We have received completed questionnaires from 570 BIGGA members, and have conducted about 150 telephone interviews with companies and organisations in the golf industry, as well as representatives of golf clubs and greenkeepers who are not currently BIGGA members. A lot of people have applauded BIGGA for having the survey carried out - and are looking forward to hearing the outcome!

As a first step, Mike Williamson will be reporting key findings from the research to the BIGGA Board at their June meeting. The Board will then decide on the best way of considering, and responding to, the detailed results that will be in the full report.

In the meantime, Mike passes on his thanks to all those who took the time to respond, often very fully, to the questionnaires and interviews. And Mike's congratulations to the 369 members who did not win the £100 voucher in the questionnaire prize draw.

(The lucky winner was Stephen Curtis, Head Greenkeeper at Richmond Park GC in Norfolk.)

Scottish National Championship

Results

Scottish Champion, SGGA Challenge Cup, Scrath, Stuart Raeburn, Tulliallan, 73.
Friendship Trophy, Best Net, Stephen Brown, Newmachar, 68.
Category One, Ransomes Trophy, 1. George Thompson, Goswick, 72; 2. James McCormack, Kininmuir, 73BIH; 3. Archie Durie, Auchterarder, 73.
Category Two, Pattison Trophy, 1. Craig Pennycuick, Winterfield, 72; 2. Colin Irvine, Muirfield, 74; 3. Alan Russell, Torshill Hill, 76 BIH.
Best Head GK, Dick Atken Trophy, Stuart Taylor, Glasgow, 73.
Best Apprentice, MBM Trophy, Kenneth Mitchell, St Andrews, 74.
Best Assistant, M&M Trophy, Andy Wilson, Newmachar, 73.
Best Veteran, SIGGA Trophy, Duncan Gray, Pines, 75.
Best Junior, SGGA Trophy, St Mungo Cup, North, Stephen Brown, James McCormack, Andy Wilson and John Urquart.
Trade: Pat Allan, Stewarts.
Guest: Scott MacCallum, BIGGA.

Stephen boxes clever at John O'Gaunt

Stephen Thompson, of John O'Gaunt Golf Club who has previously reported on the success of the bird boxes installed on the course has further good news to report.

"So far 11 our of 14 tit boxes have been accepted and we have 84 young blue tits ranging in age from half a day to 14 days. 31 blue tits were ringed and we also had a nest containing three young great tits," said Stephen.

The majority of the boxes were put up in February and March this year to give the birds time to get used to them and possibly to roost in them.

"Out of six open fronted box-es one was used and a complete nest found, presumably used by a wren," said Stephen.

"This was the first year for these boxes and it was very successful," said Stephen who works closely with Peter Wilkinson of Bird life International, who was able to ring some of the birds.
Greenkeepers came from Denmark, Scotland, Wales and England to volunteer their services for the Volvo PGA Championship held at The Wentworth Club at the end of May. Their work are much appreciated by the European Tour as by relieving caddies of the bunker raking considerable time is saved on a round, speeding up play to the advantage of all concerned.

They are also a great comfort to Course Manager, Chris Kennedy, who is one of the reasons that the Tour asked the Association if Greenkeeper Support could be made available for all four days this year. Thankfully that was not the case this year and the event was blessed with four days of almost continual sunshine. More volunteers would have been useful over the first two days as there were 52 matches to provide for and it was a great effort by those Greenkeepers who covered two rounds in temperatures around the eighties.

There was a great atmosphere in our little office, nobody being unkind to the Regional Administrator when he gave exhibitions of controlled panic and an even better one, especially on the last day in the hospitality suite overlooking the 18th green generously provided for our use by the Tour. For all from the Support Team we seemed to ‘pick up’ lots of Greenkeepers there just for the golf (including Jack and Rita McMillan!) and who managed to talk their way past security.

On a serious side eventual winner Andrew Oldcorn must feel eternally grateful to Rob Boyce, Newmarket, who was the only person to see his ball catch a branch while he was playing out of trees and land near him, still in the trees and finishing up covered in leaves. As Andrew and his caddie walked towards the green Rob called out."Where are you going? The balls here.'

Oldcorn then played a great shot on to the green and holed the putt. drink afterwards but I reckon the two shots that he would have incurred without Rob’s help were worth thousands.

The week seemed to run rather normally especially with Andrew Oldcorn and Nick Faldo posing for the cameras with the Team. I’m sure that all of the Greenkeepers, including Willy Harder who had made the trip from Denmark to work all four days, will want to return next year, hopefully with a few more volunteers to make those first two days a little easier. A great effort by all concerned.

Finally, the following conversation was overheard between a greenkeeper inside the ropes, who was accompanying the Lady Official marker during one of the days play ...

GK: What Club are you from?
Lady Official: Wentworth
GK: Do you live on the Estate
Lady Official: Yes
GK: You don’t live in one of these £3 million houses do you?
Lady Official: No darling. I live in one of these £10 million pound houses!
Derek Farrington

Greenkeepers: A real credit to their Association

Above: The 2001 Volvo PGA Championship Support Team relaxes with Nick Faldo
Below: The team poses with new Volvo PGA Champion Andrew Oldcorn
Aeration: Throughout the year Tom aerates sixteenths, during The Open - one-eighth of January, February and March there isn't absolutely necessary. Morning, twice at night.

Grass cuts: He cuts in two directions at 90 degrees. During The Open weeks he cuts it 'topping'.

Verticuts: Every two weeks until two weeks before The Open with a Buxton Sand end of the year to 2/3 times a week. The height is adjusted according to the time. The Open Championship.

Turf grooming: He uses Turf Groomers all the time. The height is adjusted according to the time. The Open Championship.

Among the speakers confirmed are Fred Green, Developer of Queenwood Golf Club, England, Nantucket Golf Club, USA; David McLay Kidd, Designer of Queenwood GC and Bandon Dunes GC in the USA; Project Manager/Membership Structures, Melvin Thomas, of Banfield GC; Dr. Albert Kausch, Rhode Island University; George Sheils, Consultant Agronomist; McIvor Fraser, Director of Research - Pure Seed Testing Inc; Paul Latshaw, US Open and Masters Course presentation and Ian Beukema, Rain Bird Irrigation Design and Operation.

The main sponsor of the Conference is Textron Golf, turf and Specialty Products.

‘I am delighted on behalf of Textron to offer our full support for the Conference. It’s a phenomenal idea. I am confident that the speakers from the US in USA will inspire delegates and undoubtedly nurture examples of good practice from day one which will benefit their golf course venture and the industry in the long term.’, said Peter Bell, Marketing Director.

Eamonn Wall and Co has appointed Antony Stravon to its new English office in the Midlands where the company has now concentrated its English based consultants. The company now has two offices, at Dollar in Scotland and Retford in Nottinghamshire.

Antony, 31, is an experienced woodland design and management consultant having worked for another company in the East Midlands for the last five years. He is a graduate of Reading and Oxford Universities and is a native of Lincolnshire. He is a keen mountaineer and a member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

Rolawn website is a real hit

Rolawn opened its web site just over a year ago and has steadily built up awareness of the site to the extent that in recent months their site has received record numbers of visits, amounting to 16000 page requests in May alone.

Recent developments have included using the site as a means of recruiting stockists for both turf and the recently launched loam products, which are sold in to the topsoil market. Potential stockists register their interest via e-mail.

“We are delighted with the progress and the way the variety of ways we are able to use the web site. It is such a flexible medium and it is particularly interesting to use it to support the development of a product as basic as topsoil. We see the web as an invaluable aid in helping us to both recruit and provide ongoing support for stockists” said Terry Ryan.

It’s all too easy to dismiss technology but we believe that in the future there will be only two kinds of business. Those that develop technology as their servant and those that technology but we believe that in the future there will be only two kinds of business. Those that develop technology as their servant and those that are going out of business.”

Simon and Jim get expanded roles at Advanta

Adavnta Seeds has handed Simon Harrison and Jim Fulton expanded roles within the company.

Based in Leeds Simon is now responsible for after sales in the north as well as managing Advanta’s advertising and PR spend, attendance at shows including BTME and SALTEX and all promotional activities.

Jim, who lives near Grantham, will also oversee the management of the east but continue to enjoy his practical support and be able to call on his technical expertise for many years to come.

The Open Championship.

Greenkeeper International previewed the Open Championship to be held at Royal Birkdale with the golf course in the excellent hands of Tom O’Brien B.E.M. It is interesting to note ‘Royal Birkdale’s Working Calendar’ at the time.

Aeration: Throughout the year Tom aerates the greens weekly, stepped up at the back of the year to 2/3 times a week.

Top dressing: He dresses the greens once a month before The Open with a Buxton sand of a consistent grade and particle size, specified by the STRI.

Grass growth: Greens are cut every day. In January, February and March there isn’t much growth because the turf is links grass and east winds retard development. It is more a case of trimming than cutting - he calls it ‘topping’.

Grass cuts: He cuts in two directions at 90 degrees. During The Open weeks he cuts the greens three times a day - once early morning, twice at night.

Length of cut: Before The Open - three to six millimetres; during The Open - one-eighth of an inch.

Watering: Yes, he uses water but only if absolutely necessary.
Rothley trespasser turned medal winner

A dog walk which took in land owned to Rothley Park Golf Club resulted in the trespasser being offered a job at the club. Six years later that trespasser, Sue Antcliffe, now Deputy Course Manager at the club has been awarded a Medal of Excellence for her outstanding NVQ Level 3 work undertaken through Brooksby College.

The medal is not just for greenkeepers but is open to everyone undertaking NVQs to Level 3 in outdoor work with only a select few out of the 18,000 in the category being awarded medals.

"I finished the course last year and the college entered me for the award. I didn't hear anything for quite a while and thought not more about it until the letter arrived," said Sue, 33.

Her unusual entry in the greenkeeping profession - she had just been made redundant from a garden centre and was looking for work - says much for Course Manager Stav Woodings ability to spot potential.

"She managed the time and talking with Sue I thought she could do a good job for me. We gave her two days a week and then added another day and before we knew it she was working full time.

"Sue then asked if she could attend college and she actually reached the regional finals of the Toro Student of the Year Award, then my Deputy left so I thought not more about it until the letter arrived," said Stav.

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Happy Birthday

Banks Amenity Products is celebrating 40 years in the golf course and landscape industries. Founded in 1961 by Reginald Banks, the company has been owned and managed by Tim Banks since 1991.

"Banks Amenity Products has been providing high quality bulk materials for four decades," said Tim.

Banks Amenity Products was one of the founder members of the BAGCC (British Association of Golf Course Constructors) and the newly formed BRTMA (British Ropes, Top Dressing and Manufactures Association).

Today the company enjoys the benefits of having an excellent reputation for supplying quality materials to some of the most prestigious golf courses throughout the UK.

Pest and Disease Audit undertaken by the STRI

The number of outbreaks and the severity of pest and diseases on sports turf throughout the UK is currently an unknown factor so the advisory team and research staff at the STRI have vowed to rectify the situation.

Part of a surplus from the STRI's advisory work is being used to fund an internal research programme into the spread and severity of pests and diseases on sports turf throughout the UK and Ireland. The programme is being co-ordinated by Dr Ruth Mann, the STRI Turf Pathologist.

Initially the research will centre on a comprehensive questionnaire which will determine the major pests and diseases across the country and any hot spots of certain problems. Questionnaires have been sent to all clubs in the UK and Ireland.

Once the replies have been collated on a database the Research Staff will be able to determine if there are any correlations between disease occurrence and management practices or weather conditions.

National Championship October 1-2, 2001

Royal Birkdale and Southport and Ainsdale GCs

All greenkeepers should have received the brochure including application form for the National Championships with the May copy of Greenkeeper International magazine. If any member has missed the brochure please contact Sarah at BIGGA HOUSE for an additional one. The response to date is such that early booking is essential to guarantee a place in the Championship.

Tel: 01247 833800
Email: sarah@bigga.co.uk

BIGGA keep up the good work

I want to take time to congratulate all of the staff at BIGGA for excellent service, prompt action to my membership enquiry and for putting together a magazine that is informative, to which I have retained its English feel over the 12 years I have enjoyed it.

The fact that I'm in Hong Kong and can still find out what is happening in the UK in this industry and keep a little finger on the pulse makes England feel at little closer.

I take my hat off to you all.

Ian Bruton, Skeo O Country Club, Hong Kong

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