

Welcome



Golf on the Up Again?

We're often reported on how the game of golf is in the doldrums and how that has had a direct effect on the greenkeeping industry and BIGGA itself, so it is good to find a survey which appears to indicate some light at the end of the tunnel.

Golf, it seems, is in line to become the number one sport for British men with more than half the male UK population teeing off on a regular basis.

The survey, carried out for the Quinn Direct British Masters, for which BIGGA Vice Chairman, Kenny Mackay and his team at The Belfry, are currently busily preparing, found that 51% of men between the ages of 20 and 50 own golf clubs and claim to play more than once a month. That figure goes up to 65% for those over 30.

The survey also makes the point of making a cost comparison between playing golf and watching football. A season ticket for Chelsea and Arsenal is over £1000 while a season ticket for The Belfry comes in under half of that. When it comes to watching or following the game, 40% of the men asked follow major golf tournaments.

Asked which sporting star they most admired golf again came out on top with Tiger Woods picking up 39% of the vote, 3% ahead of David Beckham with Johnny Wilkinson third with 17%. Now this was obviously carried out before the Lewis Hamilton phenomenon hit town but it is still very pleasing that a non-British golfer should come in ahead of Mr Posh Spice. The fact that the likes of Justin Timberlake, Catherine Zeta Jones, Chris Evans and Ant and Dec also play golf does all to its street cred.

It all indicates that golf is on the up again. And if it is true it's very good news as the game has been stuck in a rut for some time now. Memberships numbers have been down and waiting lists and joining fees are all but a thing of the past at all but the most exclusive clubs. That doesn't help clubs to produce consistent revenue streams, nor does those infamous 2 for 1 deals that have led to golf clubs cutting their throats to attract loss leader business. Golfers have been doing their sums and realising that you can play golf regularly much cheaper as a visitor than as a golf club member.

That can't be right so hopefully if there is a new surge of popularity the concept of being a golf club member will be embraced again and help to stabilise the game.

Wouldn't it be great to see a host of young golfers, welcomed by their local clubs, playing after school, having lessons and enjoying the game which gives us all our living?

However golf clubs will need to become much more friendly places to visit so when people young or old drop in they are welcomed and encouraged.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

NEW DESIGNS

Final year students, studying the BTEC National Diploma in Horticulture at Writtle College, have successfully completed the design and build of three new gardens on the grounds of the College.

The students, who carried out the build as an assessed unit within their course, had to design a garden to a client brief, draw up the specifications and detail drawings, quantify the materials required and then build the 6x6 metre garden in ten days.



Left to Right: Michael Smith, Fay Dyke (designer), Stuart Irvine in their "Inside Out Garden" sponsored by Hanging Garden Nurseries.

All materials were supplied by Writtle College and included recycled materials from previous projects. The plants were sponsored by Hanging Garden Nurseries Ltd, Premier plants UK and Grenville Nursery, all local employers located within a couple of miles of the College.

The Gardens will be used as outdoor classrooms, showing design principles, use of materials, construction issues and horticultural maintenance tasks.

BIGGA HQ TELEPHONE EXTENSIONS

As you should already be aware, BIGGA HQ recently had a new telephone system fitted. When you phone the usual number: 01347 833800, it will ask if you know the extension of the person you would like to speak to. For reference the extensions of BIGGA staff are printed below:

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