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# A boost for the rest of the year

**Ever since I've worked for BIGGA, January has meant just one thing – BTME and Harrogate. It dominates the months leading up to January and for the month itself it is last minute preparations; the actual week then the race to finish the February magazine, which is held back so it can include the Harrogate review (see pages 31-54). January just flies by.**

It has become a way of life and like so many of you, it provides a boost for the rest of the year, something that I can say that with all sincerity as I haven't attended a single show which didn't provide a feel good factor.

However, this year that was certainly amplified and the numbers which thronged to the Halls and took advantage of the superb Continue to Learn education programme were significantly higher than in recent years.

So what made the difference this year? Certainly there was a well targeted marketing plan in place aimed at encouraging visitors both from within the greenkeeping industry but also from the wider fine turf sector. Improved weather also played its part. Over the last two years December and January have been extremely cold, with many courses buried deep under snow and ice for long periods. Indeed, last year the arctic conditions stretched right up until a couple of days before the show and some people who intended to come to Harrogate had to stay back and manage the thaw.

This year one of the main features was BIGGA's 25th Anniversary Celebratory Evening and the 100 Years of Greenkeeping Associations and 25 Years of BIGGA Museum exhibit in Hall A. These were huge successes and highlighted just how much the success of BIGGA, and its predecessors, was due to the drive, commitment and passion of a few

individuals. The chance of honouring those people was, rightly, not missed.

Also, in this month's issue, you will find a fascinating article on a golfer survey commissioned by Syngenta.

The findings were quite revealing. For example it identified the importance the golfer places on the golf course above other elements of a club, like clubhouse facilities, food and beverage, practice facilities and buggy availability. That can only be strong ammunition when fighting your budgetary corner.

Another of the findings showed that smoothness of role is rated as more important than green speed. Again this might be useful in fending off the "Need for Speed" or the "Race for Pace" lobby.

An interesting set of findings, and thanks to Syngenta for choosing Greenkeeper International to share it with you.

So having come through another Harrogate and reached February the rest of 2012 is laid out in front of us. European Football Championships and the London Olympics which are now with us in a matter of seven months rather than seven years mark this down as a particularly special year and for me, with a 50th birthday coming up in August, it is another reason why this year will be memorable. When you see the number written down it looks very old but, if I'm honest, I don't really feel much older than a fit 48 year old!

Scott MacCallum  
**Editor**