

WELCOME FROM BIGGA

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Recently the results of a major study into the Economic Impact of golf in Great Britain & Ireland and across Europe were released (see page eight and the BIGGA website).

Sports Marketing Surveys carried out the study at the instigation of the PGA and with the support of many British and European bodies including both BIGGA and FEGGA. The conclusions show just how big an impact the sport of golf has on the economy producing a turnover of 15.1 billion euros across Europe and over £5 billion in GB&I alone.

The report encompasses all elements of golf-related revenue. It would be inappropriate to try and estimate just how big a proportion of the overall impact can be attributed to golf course maintenance but what is true is that golfers place huge value on the quality of playing conditions they are presented with. They are far more likely to play regularly when their course is well maintained and therefore more likely to add to the sport's revenue. Equally, improvements in course management over the years have served to make golf in GB&I a 12 months of the year affair, which undoubtedly adds to the revenue it now generates.

The report demonstrates that golf is indeed big business and needs to be run accordingly, with due recognition of all the elements that go into making it successful.

In this month's edition we carry an article from Today's Golfer magazine (page 46) that attempts to give the general public some understanding of the work greenkeepers do. This is a really important area of work for the Association as it is clear that there are clubs out there where the relationship between golfer and greenkeeper is not ideal. Thanks to all the members who responded to the Today's Golfer survey.

During the last month BIGGA has been represented at both the GCSAA's Golf Industry Show in San Diego and FEGGA's Annual Conference in Zurich.

It is fascinating to compare notes with the many other Greenkeeper Associations around the world and discover that all face similar challenges. Delivering good value to members,

effective member communication, building relationships with other golfing bodies and working with regulators, particularly with regard to chemical and water use, are all high on the agendas in boardrooms worldwide. BIGGA certainly has a role to play in supporting some of the smaller and emerging Associations but can also learn from them as they tackle similar problems in different ways.

It was again a great pleasure to spend some time with the ten BIGGA members who made up the annual delegation to the Golf Industry Show through the generous sponsorship of Bernhard and Company (see page 30).

As usual they were a varied bunch in terms of age and greenkeeping experience but they gelled extremely well and were a credit to themselves, their employers and the Association. I'd like to take this opportunity to formally thank Stephen Bernhard and his company for his long-term support of this fantastic member opportunity.

The ten delegates picked up contacts, expertise and knowledge from their trip to America which will help them significantly in their future careers.

The same can definitely be said for Jason Brooks of Torquay Golf Club who describes in detail in these pages the fantastic opportunity he had this winter to spend time at TPC Scottsdale preparing for the world's highest attended golf tournament – the Phoenix Open. Jason's decision to take time out from his career in Devon to gain such an experience should be commended and will, I am sure, have a very positive impact on his career in greenkeeping.



Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO