Apprenticeships Regional Highly Commended Newcomer Employer of the Year 2013

John O’Conner have won a Regional Highly Commended Award in the Category of Newcomer Employer of the Year by the National Apprenticeships Service.

The results were announced at a high profile awards ceremony held at the Cambridge Belfry Hotel on 5th September.

John O’Conner, Chairman, attended the awards with Ian Pitkin, Contracts Director, Neil Cain, Operations Director, Martine Dorrington, Office Manager, Neha Patel, Business Development Manager and Benedict Monck, Apprentice.

The National Apprenticeship Awards celebrate the achievements of the country’s most outstanding Apprenticeships employers and their apprentices. The awards are organised by the National Apprenticeship Service, who received in excess of 1,600 high quality entrants this year for the Central Eastern Region.

“This year’s awards were an exceptional showcase of the outstanding apprentices and employers we have in our region. Given the high volume and extraordinary calibre of entries we received, those who reached the regional final really are the cream of the crop.

I’d like to take this opportunity to congratulate John O’Conner for this superb achievement. They are a shining example of how Apprenticeships can allow employers to grow their own talent, and enable apprentices to build real careers.”
Karen Woodward
Divisional Apprenticeship Director

“John O’Conner believe the ‘grow your own’ approach really benefits the business. Our apprenticeship scheme is producing some really talented individuals and I look forward to seeing them progress within the business in the future. We recognise that money spent on training is not a cost to the business, it is an investment and we are committed to developing and training future managers from the ground up.”

Matt O’Conner, Managing Director

From the top
A word from our Managing Director, Matt O’Conner

‘This summer the contracts have been looking fantastic due to all the hard work carried out by our operational and support staff.

It has been recognised by a plethora of Green Flag and ‘In bloom’ awards, including the much coveted Gold and Silver Gilt, so a big thank-you from me to all of you for your help.

The good news continues, our Newsletter is packed full of personal and company achievements; four new babies, one marriage and five long service awards, congratulations to you all.

It is also really pleasing to see how we have been interacting with our local communities. Over the past few years this side of our business has become ever busier and I am sure that will continue.

We also have achieved recognition at the National Apprenticeship Awards and won BALI Employer of the Year. The team in Hertsmere now have police accreditation, not to mention the many charitable events that have been supported locally. It just goes to show what can be achieved when we all work together as a team.’

We really have done well, thanks for all your hard work!

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BALI Employer of the Year 2013

John O’Conner are proud to have won BALI Employer of the Year Award 2013. The Awards will be officially received at the prestigious Awards Ceremony in December at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London.

Out of the 4 winners of this award a ‘Principle Award’ winner for Employer of the Year will be chosen so fingers crossed!
Matt’s 3 Peaks Challenge

Matt O’Conner and the Three Peaks Extreme team of landscapers have completed their task to tackle the UK’s three highest peaks to raise money for our trade charity, Perennial.

The challenge saw them hiking to the top of Ben Nevis (1344m), Scafell Pike (978m) and Mt Snowdon (1085m) and, just to make the challenge even tougher, they cycled from peak to peak - a distance of 445 miles - over a period of 6 days! (6th to 11th September 2013).

The team have raised over £17,300 so far! If you would like to donate please visit www.justgiving.com/3PeaksExtreme

Supporting the Community

Midland Heart Housing Association

Well done to our Midland Heart Housing Association Team who regularly support our Customer Community Events and Carnivals.

Contract Manager Caroline and the team have arranged stalls and set up planting activities on numerous occasions to engage the children, although most of the adults join in as well!

We supply pots, potting compost and various seeds; Sunflower, Tomato, Peppers, Mint and Basil. The children participate in potting up, planting the seeds, watering and adding their names to the pots which they then proudly take home.

At a recent event we planted over 100 pots with the Midland Heart residents!

St Albans City and District Council

St Albans City and District Council and our contract team led by Paul Brady, Senior Contract Manager, organised the makeover of 3 flower-beds in Waxhouse Gate, St Albans.

Cllr Annie Brewster, Mayor of St Albans City and District, joined volunteers including members from the Earthworks charity to help re-plant the flower-beds near the city centre. Managing Director, Matt O’Conner was also present to support the SADC grounds maintenance team who were fantastic on the day.

“The new flower-beds look stunning, even ecclesiastical, with purple and red flowers dwarfed by the Cathedral backdrop. Congratulations to everyone who has supported the project and to those who have taken part in the planting. They have certainly made our City even more beautiful.”

Cllr Annie Brewster, Mayor of St Albans City and District

L&Q Creating Places Award

London and Quadrant

John O’Conner are proud to have been nominated for an ‘L&Q Creating Places Award’ 2013 for our work with L&Q.

Arron Smith, Contract Manager & Paul Stubberfield, Supervisor, will attend the prestigious Award Ceremony in London on 31st Oct 2013.

The nomination is for our ‘Saxon Walk’ Project which was led by the L&Q Community Investment Team. The aim was to involve the residents on the estate and encourage them to take ownership of the site, supporting the L&Q Mission ‘Creating Places Where People want to Live.’

John O’Conner were delighted to be involved in the project and to work in partnership with L&Q and the residents, we donated our expertise in horticulture, manpower, resources and materials.

The day was a success with our L&Q contract team clearing the planters of the existing sparse shrubs, preparing for the new compost and finally planting the plants.

Our team included Arron Smith, Paul Stubberfield, Marc Isitt, James Foster, Todd Manning, Chris Chamberlain and Alex Vernon.

An Artist was also booked by L&Q to engage with the children and create innovative painted designs on the planters. A very innovative project!

“All the while the operatives were on site they were professional and hard working and engaged with residents who wanted to be involved and also liaised with those who wanted to voice their views.

Overall, a very successful project so thanks to John O’Conner for working with L&Q.”

Sam Fuller, Neighbourhood Property Services Co-ordinator

London and Quadrant

St Albans City and District Council
Charity Swim

John O’Conner are proud to have supported a charity English Channel swim for ‘MIND.’

MIND are the leading mental health charity in England and Wales.

The donation helped to secure the services of authorised channel pilot ‘Eric’ and his boat ‘Pathfinder’.

The swim started at Shakespeare’s Cliff, Dover, on 14th August and finished at Cap Gris Nez (between Boulogne and Calais) 14 hours later.

The charity swim has raised over £20,000 so far.
Long Service

It’s always great to be able to reward hardworking staff whose loyalty over long periods of time has served our company so well.

As the company grows we really do want to continue to recognise staff and the value that they add to the business with their support and loyalty.

Congratulations to the following Long Service Award employees:

20 years

Tony Simmonds
7th July 2013
Hertsmere County Council

10 Years

Mark Preston, 12th May 2013 (North Herts DC)
Derek Brumhill, 27th May 2013 (Bedfordshire Schools)
Paul Body, 14th July 2013 (Hertfordshire University)
Stuart Young, 21st July 2013 (Leicester)

New appointments

Richard Smith, Grounds Manager for Aylesbury Vale District Council
Graham Cobb, Returning as Supervisor for East Sussex County Council

Photography Competition

We have launched a new competition! The competition is open to all John O’Conner employees and family members. There is no specific theme but your pictures should reflect, in some way, the work we do or the people who do it.

Please get your teams permission if you would like to photograph them. Be creative and have fun!

You may submit up to 3 digital files, no more than 5 Mb saved as Jpegs (.jpg).

Winners will be selected PER CONTRACT/WORKSHOP and the winning image will be printed on canvass with the winners name proudly displayed in the depot/workshop.

Winners will be announced in the next issue, all finalist images will be presented on our Facebook and Twitter Pages.

Entries to be submitted via e-mail to: neha.patel@johnoconner.co.uk. Deadline for entries is 1st December 2013. Please include your name and the contract/workshop you are entering the photo for.

All entrants understand that any image submitted to the competition may be used by John O’Connor for marketing and promotional purposes including in any media such as print and digital media directly. There will not be any monetary compensation. By winning or placing in the competition you are agreeing to these conditions.

Notice Board

Congratulations to:

Ben Bath & partner Charlie on the arrival of a baby boy Fletcher, 7lbs, March 2013
Adam Ellis and Partner Natasha Stelling on the arrival of Baby Boy Bailey, 9lb 1oz on 2nd March 2013
Paul & Debbie Miller on the arrival of baby girl Georgia Grace, 9lb 11oz on 25th May 2013
Jean Claude Louis & Partner Lucy Phillips on the arrival of baby girl Lana Marie, 8lb 6oz on 12th July 2013
Lorraine Allenden married Bob Sizeland 9th August 2013

Send your good news to: dawn.wilson@johnoconner.co.uk

We are on Facebook and Twitter!

Please ‘Like’ our Company Facebook Page and follow us on Twitter!

www.facebook.com/johnoconnergm
www.twitter.com/johnoconnergm

Please note that as we have set up Company Pages, we will not receive any updates of yours. If you ‘like’ or ‘follow’ us, any updates we post will appear in your newsfeed.

We will include: Photos, News, Events, Awards, Good News, Health and Safety Information and Bulletins.

Help us achieve 200 likes by the end of November, all staff who have connected will be automatically entered into a prize draw to win £50! The winner will be drawn on the 1st December.