

Golf Course Dramas

Golf courses are generally seen as quiet relaxing places where the opportunity to stop and smell the flowers often arises, but last month two golf courses had their tranquillity rudely interrupted by dramatic incidents that just couldn't be predicted. Fortunately in both cases the victims survived thanks to the actions of golfers.

At Taunton, Oake Manor Golf Club greenkeeper, Graham Hake (shown inset), ended up submerged under water and trapped by the Ransomes Batwing machine he was operating and was saved by two Royal Navy Airmen, just back from service in Afghanistan, who were playing the course, while at Caird Park, in Dundee, a pilot escaped serious injury after his two seater plane crashed into a tree on the 14th hole.

In Somerset, Joey Poole and Alan Mullins, who are based at the Naval Air Squadron Commando Helicopter Force at Yeovilton, raced to the scene when they witnessed the accident to discover Graham trapped under the machine and his head submerged.

Between them, using their training, they managed to lift and move the machine just enough to raise Graham's head above the water level until some more airmen and some of Graham's fellow greenkeepers arrived and between 10 of them they were able lift the machine clear and pull Graham out of the water.

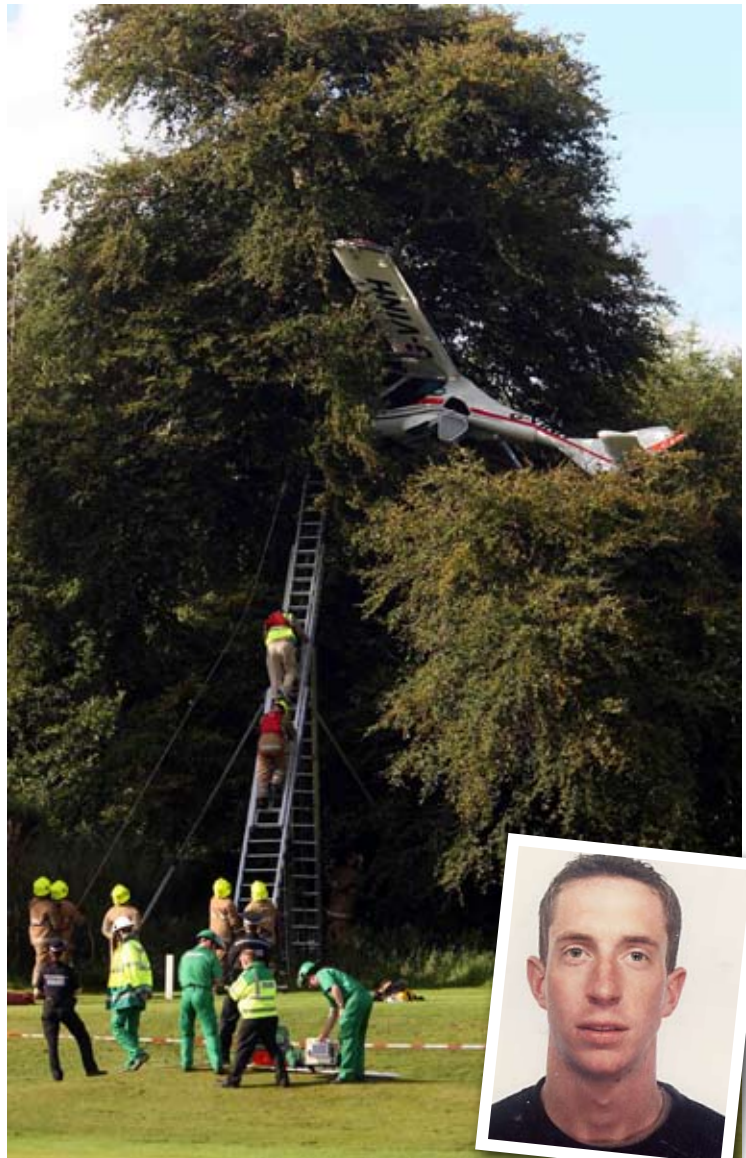
The 29 year-old was taken to hospital with minor injuries and was expected to be back at work a couple of weeks later. The Batwing was written off in the accident while the Health and Safety Executive cleared the golf club and the Ransomes' machine of blame.

In Dundee, the low flying plane which was believed to be low on fuel, and according to the local Courier newspaper, performed a U-turn over Caird Park Golf Course before stalling and careering into the tree on the 14th holes wedging between branches 40 feet in the air.

The pilot, Vince Hagedorn, from Chelmsford, Essex, told the first golfer on the scene that he was fine "but just needed a set of ladders".

Five crews from Dundee Airport fire service and a JCB attended the scene but he intrepid pilot was able to put the harness on himself, descend a ladder and walk away.

"We will comply with the wishes of the emergency services but there are not plans to shut the course at this stage. However, there may be some disruption," said a council spokesman



Photograph courtesy of the Dundee Courier & Advertiser

Annual Review of Remuneration for Greenkeepers

In light of the current economic climate and the impact that this has on golf clubs throughout the UK, the Committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS) does not feel that it is appropriate to recommend any form of review to the salary scales currently in place to be effective for 2010.

The CGCS recommends that rates of pay remain a matter for negotiation between the individual employer and employee. The CGCS further consider that employers should make an appropriate pay award to recognise any substantial change in responsibility, qualifications or

duties carried out by their employees as well as reflecting any changes to legislation governing rates of pay. Performance issues are also an important and relevant criteria in salary negotiation.

The Committee will meet early next year to review scales for 2011.