

Bangkok Golf Club at sea in worst flood in golfing history

Don Major, formerly of Betchworth Park GC, had some interesting reading when he returned from Hong Kong on a Cathay Pacific flight earlier this year.

In the *South China Morning Post*, which thankfully for Don is in English, was a report on the horrific flooding experienced by the Bangkok Golf Club and their Course Superintendent Chan Mekavichai.

"I couldn't believe the flooding that the golf club had experienced

and I thought readers of *Greenkeeper International* might want to read about it as well," said Don.

Reports the *South China Morning Post*: "It probably has to go down as the worst flood in golfing history," said American Greg Jerolaman, who doubles as General Manager and Professional.

A mere 90,000 sand bags could not prevent a dyke and a 12 inch thick concrete retaining wall bordering the 7th hole from collapsing under the sheer weight of

pressure of the rain that had fallen incessantly for eight weeks.

Over the next 24 hours in the region of two million cubic metres of water (about 20 cubic metres per second) poured on to the course, which had been closed for three days due to the non-stop downpours.

"It was terrible. There was nothing we could do except watch the water level rise," said Chan. As it rose by between 10 and 15 centimetres per hour, Chan led the frantic rush to reinforce the clubhouse by placing a further 5,000 sand bags around its perimeter.

The defence was neither high enough nor strong enough. At 5.30pm some seven hours after the flood gates had opened the water burst through. Fearful for the safety of the staff the clubhouse was abandoned. Ten minutes later the basement was under one metre of water.

Returning to survey the wreckage the next morning in boots rented from the military, it was doom and gloom. The average

depth of the water on the course was eight feet. In some areas it was 11 feet. "It was surreal. Everyone was in a state of shock," said Jerolaman.

For two months it was only possible to reach the clubhouse by boat...

For a four month period leading up to the reopening on the last day of March this year 200 labourers joined club staff working 12 hour shifts clearing the debris and irrigation system and 20,000 metres of drain liners, constructing a new 8,000 metre cart path, Re-grassing 16 greens and planting 200,000 square metres of grass, 10,000 flowers and 1,000 trees..."

It is understood that just 20% of the work was covered by insurance and the bulk of the \$4 million had to be met by the Club President.

Many thanks to Don Major for bringing this harrowing tale to our attention and perhaps allowing us to put our own problems in perspective!



The amphibious Watermaster dredger 'walked' into the lake to clear it of weeds and reeds before dredging it

...but clear water adds praise for St Pierre GC

Land and Water Services, the Surrey based inland dredging contractor and lake builder, was responsible for much of the excellent praise heaped on St. Pierre Golf Club, Chesham during the Solheim Cup.

The work done by the company involved dredging and restoration of the existing 11 acre lake and construction of a new reservoir to hold 22 million litres of water.

The first stage of the work was to completely redefine and landscape the lake edge, using

a Nicospan geotextile to support the fill material. This, together with clearance of the weeds, detritus and debris, has returned the lake to a focal point of outstanding natural beauty.

To prevent further weed growth the lake was deepened in places by up to one metre. Extreme care had to be taken at all times in order to cause as little disturbance as possible to the wildlife of the lake, one family of nesting ducks posing a particular problem.

FLYING DIVOTS

County Crops have added Brian Spencer to its team of reps. Brian who will cover the North Yorkshire/Tyneside area and will allow the greenkeepers of the area to take advantage of the 24 hours chemical service.

Sports Ground Irrigation, the Hunter distributors and

Tonick watering, have signed a marketing agreement to promote "Winwater" control systems.

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