

## Greenkeepers narrowly avoid tragedy as river wreaks havoc

‘When I fell in I just went straight to the bottom. I was fighting for my life. I was taken about 100 yards down the river.’

A routine journey across a causeway linking the King James VI Golf Club to Perth ended in near tragedy for two greenkeepers.

Head Greenkeeper Bruce Somerton and assistant Kenneth O'Donnell were crossing the causeway in a tractor and trailer from the club, which is on an island in the middle of the River Tay, when the powerful current took over.

Bruce, 33, was swept 100 yards downstream and only survived because he was able to free himself from his jacket which was dragging him under. He was eventually tossed onto the bank by a whirlpool. Ken, 27, a non-swimmer, was trapped until police in a rescue boat were able to pull him out.

It was low tide and the 30 yard long causeway was three feet deep in water when the daily crossing was attempted but, when they realised that on this occasion the current was too strong, they tried to reverse. Unfortunately, just as they began to retreat the force of the water knocked the trailer over and the tractor, with Ken still in the cab, was left balancing precariously.

With emergency services on standby on each bank, a police launch was used to rescue Ken. A safety line was attached and an officer climbed onto the top of the trailer and towards the cab. A life jacket was passed to Ken who was then able to climb out of the window and be hauled aboard the launch.

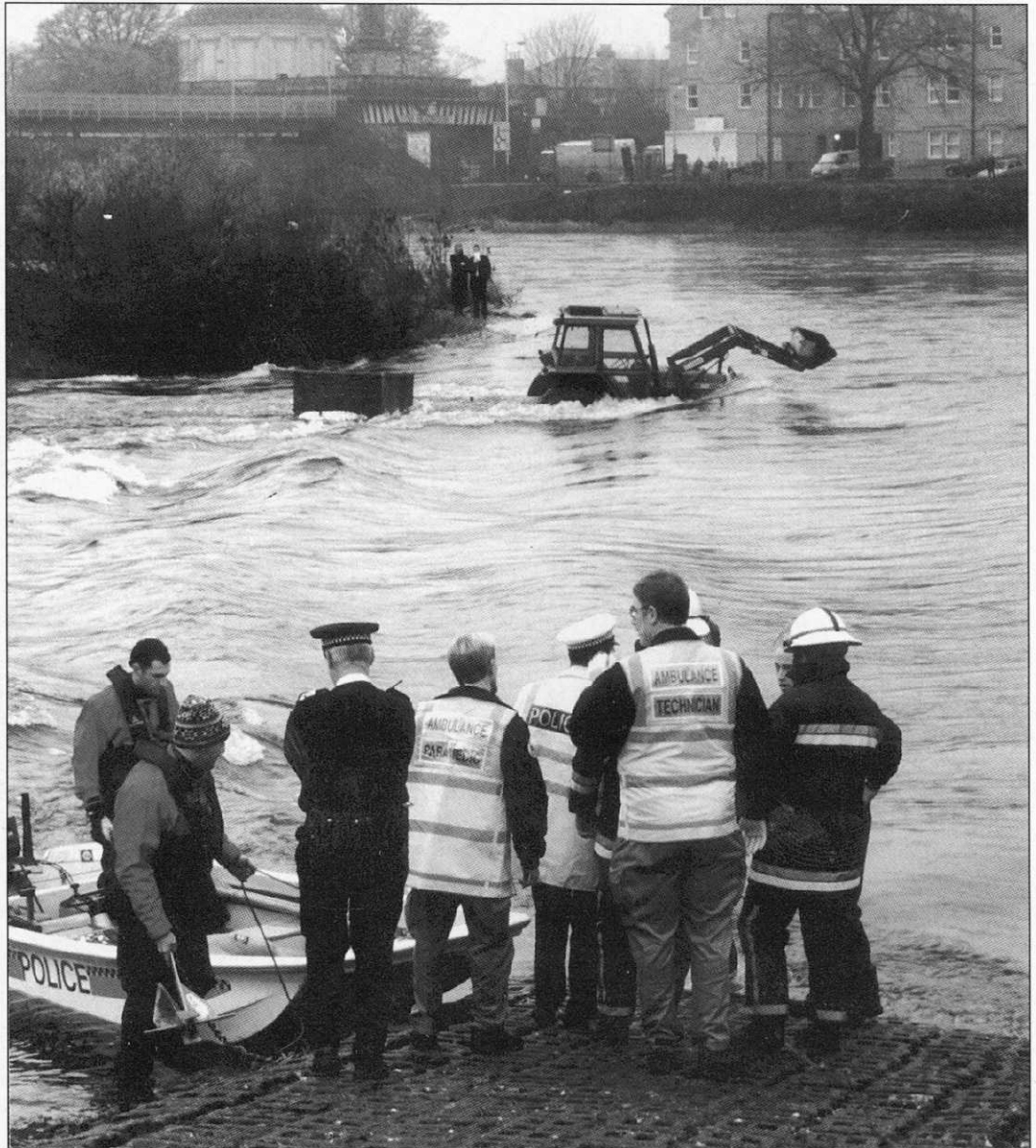
“We were trying to get across but the water was just too powerful and it knocked the trailer over,” said Bruce.

“When I fell in I just went straight to the bottom. I was fighting for my life. I was taken about 100 yards down the river and had to take off my body warmer because it was dragging me down.”

Both men were taken to Perth Royal Infirmary but later released.

The tractor was eventually winched ashore but the trailer, which contained turf cutting machinery, was washed downstream and believed lost.

■ Picture courtesy of DC Thomson and Co Ltd.



## Pattison's pledge for new year

Pattison's have relocated to new premises in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, from their original home in Luton, Bedfordshire.

“It is never easy to find the right premises, it is just like finding the right house to move into – somewhere that has the right location and a decent enough building that you enjoy going to every day,” said Mike Hinch, Joint Managing Director.

“Moving the company in the height of the season obviously caused many problems, but when the right premises came up we had to move quickly. I can now say that the company is back on track and stock levels are healthy.”

Pattison's distribute through a successful direct van sales operation and an established dealer network.

“We have worked closely with

our dealers and embarked on a rigid pricing policy to ensure that we can sell our products at the right price whether it is through our own salesman or through a dealer.”

“It has been a tough year for us but we are hoping that the close relationships that we have with the greenkeepers and organisations like BIGGA will ensure the industry moves onwards and upwards.”