



Welcome

RYDER CUP TIME AGAIN

Here we are in September already and the vast majority of the golf season is now behind us. We've had the Majors, although, as I write, the USPGA, on that brute of a course in Wisconsin, has only just begun.

Whistling Straits is over 7500 yards long. Two par-4s are reputed to be over 500 yards long and there are, count them, 1400 bunkers. Yes, that's 1400. We gather Bunker stats each year at The Open, and Royal Lytham & St Annes is the course with the most bunkers on the Open rota with a mere 197.

Collectively they trapped 1585 balls at The Open in 2001. The mind boggles about what might happen at Whistling Straits. If you divide 1400 by 18 you get an average of 78 bunkers per hole. How would you fancy being sent out to rake those at the beginning of a day? All in all it's a typically brutal Pete Dye golf course and one which, I for one, would feel I'd been sent to Hell if I had to play every day in life.

But while the Majors will be finished by the time you read this the most significant golfing event of the year is just around the corner. The Ryder Cup at Oakland Hills, Michigan, will again dominate the sports pages at a time when everyone has just come up for air after the Olympics.

The Superintendent at Oakland Hills is Steven Cook MG, CGCS. Many of you will know him from 2003 when he came over to Harrogate and I'm sure everyone on this side of the pond will wish him well at this particularly stressful and high profile time.

It is a tough old job being in charge of a Ryder Cup venue. I remember talking with the guys at the De Vere Belfry before the last Ryder Cup and they were saying how closely they had worked with Europe's Captain, Sam Torrance, on ensuring that the fairways were narrowed just about at the driving distance of the longer hitting Americans and the greens slowed to regular European pace. I know Bevan Tattersall recalls proudly being publicly acclaimed by Sam during the victory celebrations.

Giving the home side an advantage without appearing to be underhand or unfair is a delicate balancing act and I'm sure I can speak for all on this side of the Atlantic when I say we'll forgive Steven if he's set the course up in USA's favour... but only if we win!

Seriously the Ryder Cup is a truly great event. There hasn't been a dull one since I don't know when and the last one which was anything other than in the balance well into the Sunday was in 1981 at Walton Heath, when the Americans had what was generally recognised to be the greatest team ever assembled.

So good luck for this year's Cup match, Steven, and good luck to Europe.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

SPORTSTURF DRAINAGE

The next in a popular series of LDCA Sportsturf Drainage Days will be held on Thursday October 28 at the Yorkshire Event Centre in Harrogate.

Now in its seventh year these Sportsturf Drainage Days, organised by the Land Drainage Contractors Association, are the UK and Europe's only specialist Sportsturf drainage events.

The days combines a morning of presentations from well known leading figures in the sportsturf world, with an afternoon of working demonstrations from sportsturf drainage contractors.

The morning presentations cover the principles of sportsturf drainage, drainage systems, installation methods, as well as turf establishment, aftercare and maintenance. The live demonstrations will show a wide variety of different types of equipment, installing piped drainage systems with porous backfill, secondary treatments of sand slitting and gravel banding, decompaction, renovation and overseeding of turf, together with static displays of turf related equipment and materials.

The purpose of the event is to raise awareness and highlight the importance of drainage in sportsturf, to provide information on drainage systems and techniques, and to demonstrate good current practice. BIGGA Members will also be eligible for BASIS points and BIGGA credits.

Further information can be found at the LDCA website, www.ldca.org, or Tel: 01327 263264.



TURF CONSULTANT IS REAPPOINTED



Leading independent turf consultant Robert Lycock has been appointed to provide agronomic support for a fourth consecutive year to the 11 Course Managers responsible for 16 golf courses at Marriott Hotel and Country Clubs throughout the UK.

In addition to providing technical advice and assistance on all aspects of turf and soil management, Robert's role also involves the provision of detailed soil and plant analyses as required by the individual Course Managers.

Announcing the reappointment David MacLaren director of golf operations for Marriot UK commented, "We have seen a sustained rise in the year round standard of all 16 Marriot golf courses over the past three years. Much of the improvement is down to Robert who has provided us with first-class technical and practical support, working in harmony with our course managers and their staff, all of whom do a superb job.

Kenny MacKay, Senior Course Manager said, "We regard Robert both as a partner and a great help to the individual course managers. His regular targeted assessments of course quality enable us to keep a close eye on progress year on year."

RANSOMES JACOBSEN DISTRIBUTION

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd has confirmed that its distribution agreement with Scottish Grass Machinery Ltd (SGM), for the sale of Ransomes Jacobsen products in Scotland, will come to an end on November 7 this year.

An announcement will be made shortly regarding future arrangements for the sale of Ransomes Jacobsen products in Scotland, but SGM will remain an authorised distributor until 7 November.