



Welcome

OUR THOUGHTS GO OUT TO THEM ALL

I'm a regular subscriber to the satirical magazine *Private Eye* which often carries pieces on trade publications who jump on the bandwagon of world events and tie them into the more mundane business they are involved with. For example it might have something from the British Sun Tan Oil Manufacturers Association blaming a 5% downturn in fortunes on the Tsunami of last Christmas.

It is with that in mind that I hesitate to link the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina and, as I write the impending threat of Hurricane Rita, which is on the verge of striking Texas and, for the second time, Louisiana, with the impact it has had on American Superintendents and the GCSAA itself.

The catastrophe which has already befallen New Orleans and the surrounding area is of a scale that we on this side of the Atlantic can't honestly comprehend and, with Rita vying not to be undone by Katrina, the Houston and Galveston areas of southern Texas are bracing themselves for another of nature's onslaughts.

Golf seems a trivial pursuit in such a background but it is also the livelihood for Superintendents and their staff who are left without a golf course to maintain and possibly a home to live in. Our thoughts go out to those people and we hope that some semblance of normality can return to their personal and professional lives as soon as possible.

We must also share a thought for the GCSAA who had preparations for their annual Conference and Show, scheduled for New Orleans in February, thrown into complete disarray. The GCSAA staff are currently frantically rearranging the entire event for... Houston, which is in the direct firing line for Hurricane Rita.

Heaven knows how they will cope if the worst predictions of what has currently become a Category 5 hurricane, larger than Katrina, come to pass.

Our own climate comes in for much criticism but in the main it doesn't touch the extremes suffered in other parts of the world. Sure we can have droughts and the odd hosepipe ban while, living near York, I know that flooding can cause horrendous damage to property and render the odd road impassable for a while. I also know that Birmingham, of all places, was hit by a bone fide hurricane earlier this year but by and large we don't suffer from life threatening weather conditions and certainly not on the scale experienced in New Orleans.

However, with climate change being considered inevitable by more and more experts we will no doubt experience an increase in freak weather conditions, just as the sheer enormity of Katrina and Rita should be considered freakish in the States.

It's therefore important that the authorities on the wider scale and ourselves at work and at home put planning in place for every conceivable eventuality.

Hopefully this won't see me appearing in *Private Eye* in the next few weeks!

Scott MacCallum, Editor

SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2006

The Standing Committee is recommending a 4% increase for 2006 and a copy is enclosed with this issue of *Greenkeeper International*. This figure is based on the Average Earnings figures as published in June each year by the Office for National Statistics.

"June is chosen as it enables the Recommendations to be published in early October thus enabling Golf Clubs to use it for budgeting purposes," explained Don Bailey, Committee Chairman.

Since the first issue in 1997 more and more Clubs have followed the recommendations and this

year the format is slightly revised and more explanatory notes included.

"Despite its success with Greenkeepers and Secretaries the Committee feel that more effort is needed to bring the document to the attention of committee members of Clubs, who after all sign off budgets," said Don.

In recognition of the Committee's growing remit it has changed its name to "Committee for Golf Club Salaries" to reflect the fact that next year it will be publishing similar recommendations for Secretaries, at the request of the AGCS (Association of Golf Club Secretaries).

TOPPING THE CHARTS

Chart Hills Golf Club, part of the Leaderboard Group, hosted the Ladies English Open in July with winner Maria Hjorth particularly complimentary about the condition of the course. Speaking after winning the event for the second year in succession, she complimented Course Manager, Neil Lowther, saying that she didn't think the course could look or play better than it had this year.

"Obviously we took this as a great accolade. The team here worked really hard in the weeks prior to the event and had to cope with some exceptionally dry weather. The fairways looked particularly impressive and this was due, in part, to

the new mowers we purchased recently from Ernest Doe, our local Ransomes Jacobsen dealer," said Neil.

Chart Hills, located in rolling countryside at Biddenham in Kent, had over 20,000 visitors during the three day Championship and will be the host venue until 2009.

"We're learning more and more each time we stage the event. Expectations from players and spectators will certainly keep us focused in the coming years, but with the right team and the best equipment, I'm sure we can rise to the challenge," added the Course Manager.



NEW PROJECTS

Sporting Projects has joined forces with golf architects Weller Designs to create a third company, Weller McEvoy, to service the growing demand in the UK for golf course remodelling work. While both Sporting Projects and Weller Designs will continue in their own right, any golf course remodelling work undertaken by either firm will now be handled by Weller McEvoy.

"At the Walker Cup in Chicago this year I saw an amateur golfer carry the ball 351 yards. It's not just

the country's best amateurs who are hitting the ball further. New equipment technology means many players of differing abilities are achieving greater distances, often taking existing hazards out of play and, in worse cases, weakening the challenge presented by even well crafted golf holes. Our new company Weller McEvoy will help golf clubs to restore this challenge," said Sporting Projects' Peter McEvoy.