



Welcome

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Here we are - 2007. It doesn't seem so long ago that such a date seemed to belong to the realms of science fiction and not the real world. Indeed I'm old enough to remember when 1984 was some time in the future. Back then you'd have put money on us all owning personal jet packs in 2007 and thumbing through holiday brochures which included the delights of back packing in Mars; sailing down the spectacular canals of Venus or even an all inclusive, once in a lifetime, trip to Saturn's rings. That's all probably been pushed back to the 2030s by now.

So what will 2007 have in store for us?

Well, top of the agenda, as always, is Harrogate Week. If the Week goes as well as all the indicators we have had prior to it have shown, it is going to be a fabulous occasion. The range of training and education on offer supersedes anything we've ever had before at Harrogate, with career advancement opportunities for all levels of fine turf professional in whatever sphere of turf management they happen to work. Then there is the Show itself, with a guarantee of busy Halls, full of stands offering products and solutions designed to make your professional life that bit easier. Oh, and how can we forget the unique après show atmosphere of the grand old North Yorkshire spa town itself. Can there be a more convivial location in which to unwind after an action packed day?

It always provides a superb launch pad to the new year and the new season. But what will that season have in store for us?

Hopefully 2007 will be a little kinder on those areas which suffered drought last year. There can be few circumstances which render a turf professional more helpless than watching his parched sward die off when drought orders are in place preventing even the shortest of drinks.

It is something that is going to become more prevalent as the years roll on, and an issue which will tax everyone from Governments down to ourselves in the humble fine turf management business. We are all well aware of the problems but it would be nice if we didn't have to deal with the consequences every single year.

The push towards sustainable golf offers some answers but not for everyone, not in the short term anyway. Geographic location and soil structure make moves towards sustainable golf more difficult for some courses than others, while the not-to-be-underestimated inner workings of club politics is another factor which would make some Course Managers tread carefully if considering a back to fescue regime.

As ever, communication and education is the key to progress, but both require people to approach change with an open mind.

No doubt we'll still be talking about the same things in 2008, but in a few years I would like to be jet packing myself home for lunch and booking that trip to Saturn.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR GOLF?

This year's South West and South Wales Regional Seminar, held in association with the R&A, was a great success with near capacity attendance. The line up of speakers included Steve Isaacs, The R&A; Dr Keith Weatherhead, Cranfield University; Howard Swan, Golf Course Architect; Keith Adderley, Secretary Temple Golf Club; Richard Whyman, Chairman of BIGGA; Phil Weaver, PGA Chairman and Billy McMillan, Vice Chairman of BIGGA. Chairing the day was Michael Barratt, Advisory Member of the golf course committee at

the R&A. Each speaker gave a presentation on their view of sustainability and how they see the future for sustainability on the golf course. The day was enlightening and educational and it was good to see several Club Secretaries, Chairman of Greens and Club Captains in attendance, together with their Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers. The feedback from both members and club officials attending has been good with praise for the speaker's informative and interesting presentations.

EMERGENCY LANDING!

The pilot of a light aircraft on a flight over north east Fife was praised for his cool response to an emergency after he made a forced but perfect landing on Elmwood Golf Course, near Cupar.

The drama occurred when photographer David Cation, who had been flying the single-engined Cessna Skyhawk to Dundee, suffered a complete engine failure in the skies just west of the course.

After sending out a Mayday message which was picked up by air traffic controllers at RAF Leuchars, Mr Cation picked out a spot on the course and touched down on the seventeenth fairway before coming to rest on the edge of the green.

Mr Cation has an aerial photography business called Air Images.eu, and he usually operates from Kirknewton Airfield, near Edinburgh.

He had been flying to Dundee when he suffered complete engine failure, and after speaking to RAF Leuchars he realised that he would not have enough gliding height to reach the base.

He said that the first part of the golf course he thought about landing on had golfers playing, but he had then managed to pick out a clear fairway.

Mr Cation said that this sort of incident is what all pilots practice and train for, but what happened "certainly gets the blood pressure up."

"That was the first time I had experienced something like this for real, but you just do the best you can."

He added that he was sorry that he caused some damage to the course, but the staff there had been terrific, and he would be offering them some free aerial shots.

One of those on the ground was eyewitness Paul McAlister, a pro shop assistant, who said that he had been "gobsmacked" by what happened.

"I was on my lunch break and on my way to the practice range when I saw the small plane coming in really low.

"It started to go down as if to land, and disappeared behind the clubhouse, and I realised



Elmwood Golf Course Manager Andrew Mellon (centre) with greenkeeper Matt Baird (left) and Mechanic Hayden Chambers who helped to recover the plane from the course.

that it was totally silent and the engine was not working.

"The plane landed on the 17th fairway, bounced up and down a couple of times, and came to a stop up at the green. The ground was quite soft, but fortunately the wheels didn't dig in."

"No-one was hurt and there was only very limited damage to the course, but the landing was amazing."

This view was shared by Course Manager Andy Mellon, who said that he had spoken to Mr Cation after the incident and he said that his engine had cut out as he passed over nearby Ladybank.

Mr Mellon said that the landing had been perfect, and the plane had been brought to a halt within 100 yards.

Describing how the plane had been handled, Mr Mellon applied a highly appropriate description for a golf course. The Cessna, he said, had "landed, spun, then rolled on to the back of the green"

A spokesperson at RAF Leuchars said that Mr Cation had been taking the plane to Dundee, and had stopped at Glenrothes airfield on the way.

He had indicated that he was in difficulty after suffering engine failure at around 2500 feet, and air traffic controllers had helped as best they could before it was decided that the best plan was to head for Elmwood Golf Course.

The Cessna was recovered from the course by staff at the course, and was last night awaiting inspection.

Thanks to the Courier newspaper