

TOP PRIZE SCOOP

JCB has been named as the overall winner in the first-ever Best of British Industry Awards staged to honour the cream of the country's industrial companies.

JCB was unveiled as the Industrial Company of the Year at a special ceremony at the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, London, hosted by comedian Rory McGrath, and attended by top figures from the business community. Earlier in the evening JCB also collected the Industry Exporter of the Year Award.

Samir Brikho, chief executive of AMEC, the engineering and support services company that organised the awards in association with The Sunday Times and The Work Foundation, the research and consultancy organisation, said: "The Best of British Industry Awards were created to make a point – that industrial companies in Britain are dynamic and thriving. I am thrilled that the awards have made that point so forcefully. They have showcased industry moving forward with confidence in its future on the global business stage."



JCB Director Philip Bouverat (centre) receives the Industrial Company of the Year Award from (left) Jim Fitzpatrick, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment Relations, watched by the event's host, comedian Rory McGrath.

ROYAL WARRANT

Jubilee Seeds & Turf Ltd have been supplying a range of turves to the gardens at Buckingham Palace for a number of years and have been granted The Royal Warrant as Turf Suppliers to Her Majesty the Queen.

IN MEMORY

Life member Colin Stuart Murphy, or "Spud" as he was affectionately known, from TY'R Teleri, Parc Place, Maesygrwrtha, Abergavenny. Passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 28. Below is an extract taken from Peter Lacey's reading at the funeral, which was held on February 8.

"I first met Colin "Spud" Murphy in 1982 some 25 years ago, as a spotty 16 year old Apprentice Greenkeeper. Spud I seem to remember worked for Browns at the time and he used to call on my father Colin, the then Head Greenkeeper. He was an old boy to me even then, the wise old owl, the father figure of our industry, the one everyone new, loved and respected, but I hardly new him then! Colin was different from other reps though, for he had time to speak with everyone and time to tell a tale.

"We became better acquainted from 1992 when I became Head Greenkeeper and Secretary of the South Wales Section of BIGGA. Colin himself had always been a member and an active participant, for he could not just come along and do nothing, that wasn't Colin, he enjoyed collecting the cards or selling the raffle tickets, he just couldn't help himself. "He was a proud Section President of both the British Greenkeepers Association and later the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association, he led by example, an example that we'd all do well to remember!

"It would not be an understatement to say that Colin was a legend within our industry, for he is well known and respected throughout the country. He was an ambassador, a colleague, a friend and above all a gentleman. I like so many of you have fond memories but I shall miss him greatly, for he taught me so much without even knowing it! Thank you Col, we'll miss you!"

US COURSE CLOSURES OUTPACE OPENINGS

According to the National Golf Foundation, there was negative net growth in US golf facilities in 2006 for the first time in 60 years, as the number of courses that closed (146 18-hole equivalents) was greater than the number of openings (119.5).

In releasing the data, NGF said it was not an alarming occurrence but a confluence of events – openings returning to more normal levels and weaker facilities being culled. In the late 1980s, the number of openings was about 100 per year. There followed a wave of increased construction in the 1990s that peaked in 2000 with nearly 400 openings. Since then the wave has subsided to near historic levels.

The culling of courses is not viewed as a negative by NGF. The organisation expects overall course supply to stop expanding in the absence of increases in demand. It is primarily the weaker courses that are closing and, in many cases, owners who sell are profiting from long-term real estate appreciation. Finally, a better quality overall golf supply means a better quality experience for players.

THE PERFECT COURSE FOR DANISH GREENKEEPERS

Myerscough College recently presented a Danish student with the first qualification of its kind in Denmark for greenkeeping.

Antoine Challe, from Rungsted GC, in Denmark, studied the NVQ Level 2 in Sportsturf course online over two years. There are currently eight other Danish students on the program who are from six different golf courses and there has been interest from a number of other students from across Denmark in the course.

Two highly experienced Sportsturf Assessors from Myerscough College visit the students in Denmark every three months working from Rungsted GC in Denmark where the students complete training and theory work.

Fellow Danish student Jacob Aakjaer from Horsholm Golf Club has also recently completed the course and two more students are close to finishing the course, which will take the count to four completed.



Antoine Challe (left) receiving his certificate from Work-based Assessor Simon Dadge (right).